

India Now

March, 1984

Monthly News Publication of Indian People's
Association in North America (IPANA)

This PDF is prepared by Sukhwant Hundal in memory of his father
Shivdev S. Hundal and mother Harbans Kaur Hundal.

Source: Sukhwant Hundal's personal collections

INDIA NOW

Vol. 7 No. 3 March 1984

Monthly News Publication of the Indian People's Association in North America

Scores Killed in Punjab

Bhindranwale-Longowal Split in Open

KISHAN BAJWA

Situation in Punjab has become extremely tense with the 18-month old agitation launched by the Akali Dal taking a different turn. Perhaps for the first time in history, there have been reports of serious violent clashes between Hindus and extremist Sikhs. Clashes between extremists and the police have also been reported in villages and other areas. Over 60 people have been killed in riots and police firing in the last two weeks. Most of urban Punjab is under curfew with the police and paramilitary forces given shoot-at-sight orders. Haryana is also tense following clashes between Hindus and Sikhs.

Tripartite negotiations among the Akali Dal leaders, opposition parties and the central government which started on February 14 were called off after communal violence erupted. The decision to resume negotiations reportedly followed the Akali-sponsored strike on February 8

which contrary to the government's reported speculations was largely peaceful. The formula under consideration includes Chandigarh going to Punjab and Fazilka and Abohar divided to Punjab and Haryana with Haryana being paid due compensation for building a new capital. On river waters, a commission headed by a supreme court judge is being contemplated.

In recent violence, over 60 people have been killed in bomb blasts, police firing as well as random shooting by unidentified extremists riding on motorcycles. Sikh extremists have also been reported to be firing from the rooftops of the Harminder Sahib, the Golden Temple, in Amritsar on the police, paramilitary forces and general public. According to one report which quoted a Police Superintendent, the trouble started on February 14 when groups of militant Hindus started roaming through Amritsar and other Punjab towns throwing stones and

(continued on page 11)

A Disservice to Sikhs

PRAN CHOPRA

The President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee, G.S. Tohra, categorically said in Calcutta on January 10 that the Sikhs do not want Khalistan or a separate state by any other name. He has said this many times before as well. But in the present atmosphere of suspicion and misgivings about the direction of Sikh politics, affirmations of this kind are welcome as often as they come.

Eighteen months ago the Akalis launched an agitation to press demands which, in the form in which they were presented to the government of India, have nothing separatist or communal about them. They differ very little from the kind of demands which are raised in all parts of India by many parties. Their acceptance would benefit not the Sikhs alone but the whole of Punjab. Some of them are religious but do not affect the life of any other community. The Akali Dal itself only adopted and advocated means of agitation which were as nonviolent as most agitational methods are in India these days and have long been ac-

cepted as part of the legitimate Indian political tradition.

The agitation faced heavy political odds. The demands were thoroughly misunderstood at first, thanks partly to the mistakes the Akalis made themselves. They allowed the rhetoric and the style of their agitation to make the demands themselves look communal, which in fact they were not. For this reason the Akalis also failed to attract Hindu support for the agitation, and the more they failed the more their agitation looked like a show run by and for the Akalis alone, and the more it scared the Hindus.

TACTICAL COMMUNALISM

Gandhi used this situation with superb cynicism and opportunism in the interests of her party (never mind the interests of the country) to swing all Punjabi Hindus behind her and to present herself to the Hindus of northern India as their only salvation. The Akalis were in danger of total isolation.

As the pressure of the Akali agitation continued unabated, the opposition to the demands themselves began to subside. The demands, though not the agitation, began to be recognized as Punjabi and noncommunal. The Punjabi Hindus began to show, at least in private, willingness to support them if the Akalis would press them in a noncommunal way. Although still willing to vote for Congress(I) in the absence of any alternative, they began to see through Gandhi's tactical communalism. Many opposition parties more openly came out in support of the demands, and step by step, however grudgingly, the government began to accept many of them in substance.

DANGEROUS TRENDS

There are serious reasons why any Akali conclusion to intensify the agitation now without reforming it first would be dangerous. In the eyes of most non-Sikhs and many Sikhs as well, the Akali agitation has lost much of its original character of a nonviolent and legitimate movement. Many have infiltrated it whose acts are criminal and violent or whose speeches border on sedition, secession, and the preaching of violence. Their destructive activities are no longer confined to Punjab alone, they have struck in other parts of India too, to the serious detriment of a large number of Sikhs who have hitherto lived peaceful and prosperous

(continued on page 3)

Politics by Execution

Kashmiri Secessionist Hanged

R.N. Raju

The Government of India carried out the death sentence on Mohammed Maqbool Butt, a Kashmiri secessionist who had been held in Indian jails for the last seven years. The death sentence carried out by hanging on February 11, has been clearly stated to be in retaliation to the kidnapping and the killing of the Indian diplomat R.H. Mhatre in Birmingham, England. These developments have given fresh impetus to the attacks on the state government of Jammu and Kashmir under the chief ministership of Farooq Abdullah by Congress(I). Another important consequence of the recent events have been the increased strain in the relations between India and Pakistan and the new psychological impediments that have been placed in the already slow road towards normalization of bilateral relations. The hanging of Butt also raises uneasy questions about how the government seeks to deal with political dissent.

Butt was sentenced to death in 1968 for murdering an intelligence officer in Kashmir two years earlier. He escaped from jail at that time but was captured and given a second second death sentence in 1976 for killing the manager of a bank during dacoity. He had been transferred from the prison in Srinagar and held in Tihar jail for the last seven years. The government chose to delay the execution all these years by keeping his mercy petition to the President in abeyance.

Butt's release had been demanded by a group calling itself the Kashmir Liberation Army. This group is held responsible for the kidnapping and the subsequent killing of the Indian diplomat Mhatre associated with the consular office in Birmingham. Following the killing of Mhatre, the government advised the President to reject the mercy petition on behalf of Butt. A special messenger was sent to Calcutta to get the signature of the President in an order rejecting the mercy petition thus allowing the execu-

tion of Butt to take place. The Amnesty International, the human rights group had appealed to the Indian government to spare Butt's life saying his execution would appear as retaliation for Mhatre's slaying. The Indian government ignored the appeal and carried out the hanging since it appears intended to portray the hanging as a clear response to the secessionist demands.

Butt's body was buried in the Tihar jail's compound. His younger brother who was attempting to come to Delhi to claim the body was detained by the police at the Srinagar airport, before boarding a flight to Delhi. The police gave no explanation for the detention. Three lawyers, R.S. Pathak, Muazzafar Beg, who is also the vice-chairman of the Kashmir People's Conference and R.M. Tufail said they possessed the power of attorney to claim the body but were not allowed inside the jail premises.

Butt's hanging has had other political consequences. The Cong(I) general secretary, Rajiv Gandhi accused the state government of Jammu and Kashmir for allowing for infiltration of the state by armed Pakistanis. He even implied that the state's chief minister himself was a security risk. Talking in the state assembly, chief minister Farooq Abdullah refuted Rajiv Gandhi's charge that there had been Pakistani armed infiltration in the state and that the state's intelligence agencies were not cooperating with the central intelligence agencies in dealing with these infiltrators. Abdullah said those who were accusing him of being a "security risk" were themselves in power when Maqbool Butt managed to escape from the Central Jail in Srinagar.

It is wellknown that the Cong(I) has been attempting to destabilize the Abdullah government for the past year. So far it has not succeeded in doing so in spite of the no-confidence motions it had introduced in the assembly and by the active

(continued on page 11)

National Integration Council Meets

Indira Gandhi called for a national consensus to promote integration and advocated a code of ethics for all political parties to fight divisive forces. She was inaugurating the meeting of the National Integration Council, which met in New Delhi on January 21 after a lapse of four years. Gandhi said there was need to revive a national campaign to fight communalism, regionalism, and linguistic fanaticism.

N.T. Rama Rao said that a smooth and harmonious center-state relationship was of paramount importance in promoting national integration. He said other than communalism, there were many more important political, economic and social factors which posed a major threat to the unity and integrity of the nation.

After the division of states on linguistic basis, unity had been achieved by adequate appreciation of the distinctions and differences among the states in a truly federal spirit. This enjoined on the center the responsibility of respecting the democratic will and aspirations of each state. In this context, he regretted that the center had turned down the Andhra Pradesh Assembly's request to abolish the Legislative Council: "We are sore over the disrespect and disregard shown to us in this matter."

Rao said the impression created in the public mind that attempts were being made to dislodge constitutionally formed governments in states ruled by different political parties and the misgivings expressed about the role being played by governors in the process were matters that required to be taken up by the council.

Ramakrishna Hegde strongly advocated that every boy and girl should be made to serve in the army for two to three years to inculcate in them a sense of basic discipline, team spirit and fellow feelings in order to strengthen the forces of national integration.

(continued on page 11)

INSIDE:

- The Main Threat 4
- Myth Behind VHP 4
- Strikes in TN 8
- Law Commission Proposals 10
- Prem Chand 12
- Dealing with Playboys 12

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Zia For Ceiling on Defense Spending

Speaking at a seminar on South Asia cooperation in Islamabad, Pakistan's President Zia-ul-Haq said that Pakistan was prepared to put a ceiling on defense expenditures provided that India is willing to do likewise. Zia also said that he would agree to spending an equal percentage of the GNP on defense. Zia added that he favored reduction in arms and armaments on both sides and was willing to meet Indira Gandhi to work out the means and methods. Zia also said that he regretted that he had made several offers to Indian government for peace and conciliation but had met with no success.

Zia added that he made it clear to Indian government that no-war pact he wants both countries to sign would apply to Kashmir and that Pakistan was committed not to use force to settle any issue between India and Pakistan. Zia is reported to have said, "No war-pact extends the Simla Agreement, it does not restrict it."

Zia also reiterated that he had vainly asked India government to send its military commanders to Pakistan to determine what they considered the level of forces Pakistan should have.

Zia expressed satisfaction with Pakistan's relations with other neighboring countries in South-Asian subcontinent. He added that he was on "a peace offensive and I refuse to be provoked." He made a pointed reference to a statement by Rajiv Gandhi on the possibility of a war between India and Pakistan and wondered how it helped the situation.

Regarding his government's relation with US government, Zia said that Pakistan was not subservient to America and that it had not offered any bases. He said that stories appearing recently in newspapers, including Pravda, were wrong. He also contradicted a report in some American newspapers that Pakistan was seeking a security arrangement from the US.

USSR Invites Private Sector

According to a visiting Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade N. Smelvakov said that India occupied an important place in the Soviet trade. Smelvakov headed a delegation from Soviet experts which were visiting India to discuss trade and industrial cooperation between Soviet Union and the Indian private business. The delegation was scheduled to meet Indian businessmen to hold preliminary discussions and explore possibilities for increased export of Soviet machinery to India. Inaugurating the seminar, Heavy Industries Secretary DV Kapoor said a team of experts from India will visit Soviet Union in February to see factories there and work out areas of import of Soviet machinery and equipment. According to the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce President AK Jain, the USSR had already supplied technology to public sector undertakings and about 100 projects in India. But this cooperation had to be extended to other industries and sectors.



Leadership Changes In the Soviet Union

R.N.Raju

duction and demanded strict enforcement of discipline in the performance of workers. A popular impression was generated that there will be some positive changes within the internal economy of the Soviet Union and there will be restricted abuse of political power by the ruling elite compared to the Brezhnev era. In international affairs, Andropov took a strident posture and the relations between the two superpowers USSR and the USA were at their worst. The 15 months was too short a time for seeing any specific imprint of Andropov in relations with the rest of the world, particularly with the developing countries. Andropov expressed some interest in normalizing relations with China. Relations with India continued to be strong as it has been over the last 25 years.

Following Andropov's death it was being debated whether his policies and his leadership style would be continued by the coming into power of one of his principal associates. The longer time it took for Chernenko to be elected as the leader is interpreted as suggesting factional conflict between those who shared power in the Brezhnev era and those who were seeking some form of change during Andropov's time. The present situation is perceived as a fragile compromise and given the age of Chernenko, it is seen as a somewhat temporary solution.

At the time of the Andropov funeral, when visiting foreign leaders met with Chernenko, a lot was made of the con-

ciliatory tone of conversation between Vice-President Bush of the USA and the new Soviet leader. Bush himself remarked favorably about the meeting raising hopes of talks between the two superpowers concerning the arms race and the world tension both of which are fueled by the two powers themselves. At the central committee meeting which elected him, Chernenko said "We do not want military superiority. We do not intend to dictate our will to other people. But we will not permit the achieved military balance to be broken." He also said that the Soviet Union would continue to strengthen its defense potential and had sufficient means to "cool off the hotheads of militant adventurism. This is a significant precondition for preservation of peace."

Given that the change in Soviet Union is a consequence of Andropov's death and not a consequence of any important policy difference in the conduct of international policy, there does not appear any reason to anticipate a change in the USSR - USA relations or the relations between the USSR and the West in general. Also relations between India and the Soviet Union are unlikely to undergo any shift from the present. Only in the domestic economic policies, there could be some differences between what Andropov may have sought to achieve and what Chernenko may attempt to do. But even in this area, significant changes are unlikely because of the tenuous nature of individual power wielded by Chernenko. There is no indication to this writer that the change in Soviet leadership portends any important departure from the present state of affairs.

Zia: Gandhi Welcome In Pakistan

Pakistan's President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq said that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was welcome to visit Pakistan any time convenient to her. When asked about reports about growing risk of a confrontation between India and Pakistan, President Zia minimized it and instead stressed what he called was closer collaboration between the two countries.

In another development, Zia also praised Indira Gandhi for her "remarkable restraint" in Lanka's ethnic crisis last summer. However he also insisted that "It is the Sri Lanka government that must insure that no situation like this occurs, especially a repetition of events." Zia also suggested that small countries like Sri Lanka in the region should cultivate friendship with China, and adding that China was a power bordering South Asia had never interfered in the internal affairs of other nations.

Gandhi: US Policy Opposed to India's Interests

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said in an interview with the Associated Press that her cordial relations with President Ronald Reagan were "entirely on a personal basis" but that official Washington policy was entirely opposed to India's. Gandhi charged that the US government was following a policy of double standards toward India and that it was cultivating dictators around the world, be South Asia, Philippines, Latin America, or Africa. Gandhi was quoted as saying, "The Administration talks of democracy but actually whom does it help? The majority are not democratic. They help dictatorships of one kind or the other." Gandhi also said that the US government does not seem to be bothered about India.

US in Lebanon

Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao attacked US foreign policy in Lebanon in Abu Dhabi and said that the US presence in Lebanon did not help restore stability there. Rao said that the latest flare-up in fighting between rival Lebanese factions was a proof that the US forces had failed in making a positive contribution to settling the Lebanese problems.

Little Progress In Sri Lanka

R.N.Raju

The all-party conference in Sri Lanka convened by President Jayewardene to deal with the Tamils issue has made little progress dampening the earlier mood of optimism. The fact that various political parties chose to participate at the conference despite their misgivings on various counts gave rise to considerable optimism that a peaceful, negotiated settlement on the issue affecting the two important ethnic groups in Sri Lanka would soon be arrived at. However, the progress in the talks have been very slow and the various groups appear to persist in their rigid postures.

The round table conference was attended by 17 political parties and ethnic groups. The two major Sinhala parties, President Jayewardene's UNP and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party of the former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranayake attended the conference along with the Tamil political parties and representatives of various ethnic and religious groups. Some of the delegations were constituted to include representatives of different ethnic groups. All this gave rise to the optimism that the violent approach to the problem witnessed by the island will not be repeated and a solution will be arrived at.

Indian Leaders Denounce Election Plan

Majority of Indian and Colored leaders denounced with anger South African government's decision to hold elections on August 22 for the two communities to be represented into the new segregated chambers. The president of the Natal Indian Congress, George Sewpersadh condemned the decision and said that it was an abrogation of the rights of the people without first trying to find out through a referendum whether they wanted to participate in a system that excluded the majority of the population, the Africans.

Sewpersadh said that his organization had supported a referendum to test the views of the people because he wanted the people to show the racist government and the world at large they rejected the new constitution. "We demand that a

a national convention be convened so that the majority of the people can formulate a new constitution. We do not want a constitution that has been planned and formulated by the white ruling class."

Sewpersadh called upon the Indian and colored people to boycott the elections "so that the world will know that the majority of the colored and Indian people have not forsaken the struggle for justice and freedom for all people in South Africa."

The president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Alan Boesak, a prominent Black leader, said that the colored and Indian people who participate would become junior partners in the oppression of the majority of the black people and apartheid.

NATIONAL SCENE

Plea to Punjab's Silent Majority

Some 150 well-known Punjabis have joined in an appeal calling on "men and women of goodwill — the silent majority" to speak its mind on the dangerous Punjab situation and challenge the divisive forces at work by asserting "an authentic secularism." The statement says in part:

"It is imperative that the demands voiced in Punjab be demarcated as demands not of a particular community but of a region as a whole. ...

"Today, the basic issues in the region concern the future of Chandigarh, boundary adjustments, share of river waters and the rights of states vis-a-vis the center.

"Chandigarh was built to compensate Punjab for the loss of Lahore. There is no reason for that decision to be altered. Surely the nation can afford to give Haryana the funds for its own capital. ...

"Issues like the future of Abohar and Fazilka and other disputed areas based on the principles of linguistic demarcation should be settled on the basis of contiguity, with the village as a unit. ...

"The allocation of river waters is not a political problem. It is technical and legal and should not be politicized. The views of experts from the affected states should be placed before a tribunal presided over by a judge of the Supreme Court of India. Reasons of prestige, political gain or 'face' have no place in the search for intelligent, rational solutions.

"The fourth demand Punjab shares with all other states of union. The Sarkaria Commission is examining the question of rights between the center and the states, so its recommendations will have to be awaited.

"On the face of it, none of these demands seem to be insuperable. It is the center's inaction, its disquieting lack of will to take decisions, that has allowed the play of extremist forces to flourish and grow. ...

"We call upon all men and women of goodwill — the silent majority which is the real backbone of this country — ... to:

"I) condemn all acts of terrorism, violence and communal killings;

"II) support each other in maintaining the peace of a secular society;

"III) respect the sanctity of every place of worship and denounce any attempt by anyone to desecrate any such place; and

"IV) oppose attempts by anyone to use places of worship of any community as a refuge from the law, for that is the worst form of desecration."

SIGNATORIES

The appeal was signed by about 150 persons, many of them with backgrounds in the armed forces or the civil service. Some of the names are given below.

Brig. W.S.Ahluwalia, Karuna Ahmed, Air Marshal Ajit Nath, Lt. Gen. Ajit Singh, Air Chief Marshal Arjun Singh.

Pran Chopra, Air Marshal H.C.Dewan, Lt. Gen. J.S.Dhillon, I.K.Gujral, Gurbachan Singh, IFS, Gurcharan Singh.

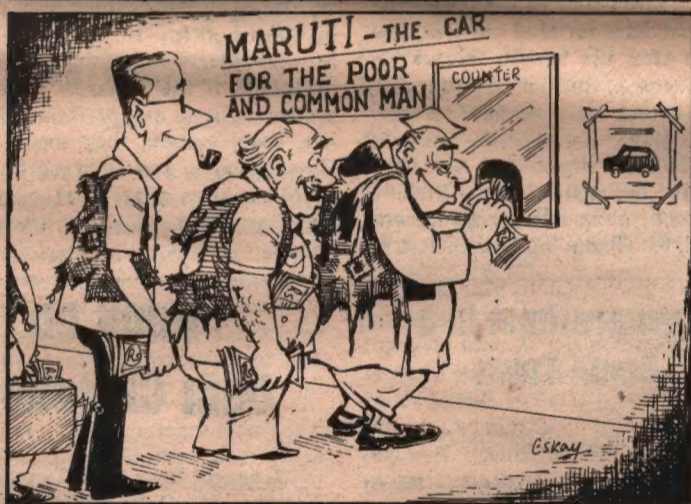
Harcharan Singh Dugal, Dr Harish Chander, Indrajeet Singh, Dr Jagjit Singh.

Dr Jugal Kishore, G.L.Loomba, Kamla Mankekar, Chief Justice Ranjit Singh Narula, Dr Devraj Narang, Kuldip Nayar.

Dr Pritpal Singh, Amrita Pritam, Balraj Puri, Romesh Thapar, Romila Thapar, Trilochan Singh, Sham Lal, H.D.Shourie.

SIDESHOW

By ESKAY



A Disservice to Sikhs

(continued from page 1)

lives there but are now looked upon with suspicion by their neighbors.

Grave things have also happened within the movement itself. Dangerous extremists have gained power at the expense of those who only want a rational settlement on the basis of the demands they have placed before the government. They seem to have gained control of the Akal Takht in the Golden Temple at Amritsar.

It is true that the top three Akali leaders — Tohra, Longowal and Badal — have often dissociated themselves from such speeches and actions. But that has not cleansed the character of the movement, either in fact or in the public mind. On the contrary, its image grows uglier by the day as the murders and dacoities committed in its name continue. These events have reversed the two healthy developments of six months ago: the rift behind Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab is again growing wider at a frightening pace, and the Akali Dal has again become isolated from the all-India parties. Even the Unit-

ed Front and the Janata Party have abandoned it. In its present form the agitation has done a disservice to the Sikhs.

It does not follow that the Akali Dal must abandon the movement or even suspend it. It would be most unrealistic politics to expect that to happen. But it does mean that the Akali Dal should first concentrate its efforts on taking the movement back to the cleaner image it had before the murder of Atwal, the police DIG, before the massacre at Dhilwan, and before the movement became identified in the public mind more with Bhindranwale than with Longowal. Only then will the Akali Dal be able to resume building bridges with the Hindus of Punjab and other opposition parties, and only then will the latter be able to resume building bridges with the Dal. Without these two-way linkages the movement will only disrupt and destroy the prosperity of Punjab, that cannot be the aim of the Akali Dal, because it will hurt the Sikhs more than anyone else.

(excerpted from the Indian Express)

Indira Denounces India Today

R.N.Raju

PREVIOUS OUTBURSTS

INDIRA LABELS AS ANTI-NATIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT RAJIV

Prime Minister Gandhi has labeled the fortnightly India Today as anti-national for raising questions about the performance of Rajiv Gandhi as the General Secretary of Congress(I). Gandhi made her vehement attack on the Delhi based publication at a press conference in Calcutta at the end of the convention of her party. Gandhi said that the freedom of the press does not mean writing things which are not in the national interest.

The Prime Minister lashed out at India Today at the press conference in Calcutta in response to a question posed by the Principal Correspondent of the magazine, Sumit Mitra. Mitra asked: "Madam, you are the President of the Congress(I) party. As the president, how do you assess the performance of the next tier of leadership of the party, that is the general secretaries?" He repeated the question again when the Prime Minister seemed to have not heard him properly. "How do you assess the performance your general secretaries, particularly that of Rajiv Gandhi?" Prime Minister Gandhi flared up saying "I will not answer the question." She then let out a barrage of criticism at the periodical, demanding "What sort of question is this? Is it of any importance? I have read your magazine and you publish a lot of dirt, some of which is downright anti-national. I am not opposed to the freedom of the press but freedom of the press does not mean writing things which are not in the national interest."

Responding to the Prime Minister's accusations, India Today commented editorially that the word anti-national has become a convenient catchword for the ruling Cong(I). The India-is-Indira slogan has come to acquire a dangerous and distorted message; any criticism against her is a criticism of the country. The Telegraph in an editorial said: "If Mr Rajiv Gandhi is going to take decisions that affect our lives, then we want to know how good he is at taking those decisions. And since his mother, apart from being his mother, is also President of the Congress(I), she is the best person to address the question to."

In a subsequent letter to India Today, K.R.Sundar Rajan of Hindustan Times wrote of his own experiences with Indira Gandhi in the past.

"I have been a victim of Mrs Gandhi's psychotic behavior at two national press conferences. On the first occasion I wanted to know why she was attacking the Opposition for their peaceful agitations and reminded her that when she was in the Opposition, she had often said that the Opposition had the right to remove the government of the day through constitutional means. 'I didn't say any such thing,' she burst out. I pointed out that the two news agencies and all the leading newspapers had reported her statement. She refused to entertain any supplementaries from me and went on to the next question.

"The second occasion was more revealing. At her last national press conference a few months ago, I asked her what was being done to improve the credibility of All India Radio and Doordarshan which were under total political and bureaucratic control. She became livid with rage and in a trembling voice retorted: 'What is your credibility?' Then she launched an attack on the entire press in much the same language used in 'answering' Mitra's very pertinent question at her press conference."

To readers of India Now, the Prime Minister's outburst may not come as a surprise. In these columns, the contributions of Indira Gandhi in trampling all democratic norms have continually been documented. The most recent example is the manner in which Rajiv Gandhi has been foisted on Congress(I) and on the nation as the successor to the Prime Minister. What is of concern in relation to the India Today incident is the attitude of the press in being submissive to the ruling interests. Very little condemnation of Gandhi for her response has appeared in the Indian press. The situation is a reminder to the period of internal emergency declared by Gandhi during which the majority of the media accepted the restrictions rather than stand up for any journalistic independence. It seems that the majority of the Indian publications with mass circulation have self-imposed on themselves the policy of generally being amiable and uncritical of the Prime Minister and all her anti-democratic actions.

Rajiv Who?

IQBAL MALIK

Doordarshan's national news covered the inauguration of the Gwalior TV relay center by Rajiv Gandhi on January 5, while the chief minister of MP and the union information and broadcasting minister looked on happily at the signal honor being done to the state and Doordarshan. This was the first time ever that a political party office-holder had inaugurated a government facility while a minister and a chief minister took the back seat. In fact, Arjun Singh is reported to have requested Rajiv and Bhagat to give special consideration to establishing more TV centers in the state, implying that Rajiv had a say in disposal of government resources.

That may or may not be so, but the point is that Rajiv Gandhi has no con-

stitutional or administrative authority to undertake such inaugurations. The idea behind arranging such functions clearly is to create an extra-constitutional authority with the connivance of the central and Congress(I) state governments and with the active participation of Gandhi himself.

It is necessary for Rajiv Gandhi not to leave any room for ambiguity about his real position in public life. If he wants to be a star performer at central and state government functions, he should hold a ministerial position. Otherwise he should not identify himself with government agencies, much less make them look subservient to the party.

(excerpted from the Indian Express)



OPINION

The Main Threat to India's Integrity

V. KUMAR

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her Cong(I) party have emerged as the principal threat to India's integrity. Lest this is thought to be too outrageous a statement, consider the following facts.

In the sensitive border state of Jammu and Kashmir, Cong(I) under the obvious inspiration of its leader has been carrying on an unremitting campaign of destabilizing and toppling the legally elected government of the National Conference led by Dr Farooq Abdullah. In the course of this campaign, Cong(I) has enlisted under its banner an assorted crew of thugs, intriguers, turncoats and family retainers whose political following in the Kashmir Valley is utterly negligible and whose activity is limited to destroying government property and issuing blatantly false accusations, which no one believes, against the Abdullah regime of harboring antinational and seditious elements. The completely laughable nature of these accusations is made more ironic by the fact that many of Gandhi's henchmen who are making these accusations have themselves a long history of hobnobbing with various pro-Pakistan groups in the valley. Tariq Abdullah, for example, was even a member of Pakistan's delegation to the UN when the Kashmir issue was last seriously taken up for discussion in the General Assembly.

In one sense the motivation for the campaign appears to be just the familiar lust for power, greed and aggrandisement of the most venal kind which has become the principal ideology of the Cong(I) party. On this view, having failed to arrive at a seat agreement with the National Conference at the time of the June elections to the state assembly and having been routed at the polls in the valley, Gandhi is now venting her pique at Farooq Abdullah in the foulest manner possible. Abdullah's presence and activity in the Opposition conclaves in Srinagar and Calcutta have added fuel to this pique, to the extent of making him the

target of physical assaults by Cong(I)'s gangster-politicians such as Priya Ranjan Das Munshi and Arun Nehru.

In another sense, however, the Cong(I) campaign has little to do with Jammu and Kashmir itself. The party has so little following in the valley that even if the National Conference government is forcibly overthrown, Cong(I)'s chances of coming to power on its own in a fresh election are very meager. Gandhi undoubtedly knows this well. So her fulminations against the legally elected government of Jammu and Kashmir are largely a matter of sending a "message" to voters in the Hindi belt to show how tough she can be on Muslims, who happen to constitute over 90% of the valley's population. In this sense, the campaign is largely a device to gather votes in other parts of India by stoking the fires of Hindu communalism. The rankest communal propagandistic appeals to Hindu sentiments addressed by Gandhi over the last several months, particularly in areas such as Jammu where her party was able to displace BJP on the basis of such appeals, lend credence to this view.

Whichever of these two views more closely reflects Cong(I)'s motivation, the campaign shows an utterly reckless disregard for national integration. Given the history of Kashmir and given the fact that Farooq Abdullah is perhaps the first Kashmiri leader to involve himself in a noncommunal fashion with national political issues, the campaign is likely to further embitter the Kashmiris and the Indian Muslim community as a whole. Gandhi does not care, figuring perhaps that if Abdullah is made to fall and the Kashmiris rise in protest, the army and the battalions of other police forces can take care of them as they are increasingly doing any way for civil administration in other states. The national interest can go hang itself if Hindu communal propaganda can provide a convenient vehicle to her to garner votes in the forthcoming elections.

Tamil Nadu Police Politics

The chief of intelligence, Mohandas, has been elevated to Director-General of Tamil Nadu Police. He will share the campus of DG with K.Radhakrishnan.

Mohandas will be responsible for CID. His promotion was expected for some time. He has headed the intelligence wing for eight years except in 1980 when MGR was out of power. He reportedly enjoys MGR's confidence, having done many delicate jobs for the chief minister, including keeping a close watch of AIADMK ministers, partymen, officials and Opposition leaders.

TN Ordinance on Video Clubs, Libraries

The recent Tamil Nadu ordinance regulating the exhibition of commercial films through video has been challenged in the Madras High Court.

Section 9 of the ordinance requires video library owners to keep and produce on demand a letter of consent for each film exhibited, from the first owner of the

Palkhivala: Center-State Relations

Former Indian Ambassador to US and a lawyer N.A. Palkhivala said on Jan 29 that the next Lok Sabha election should be fought on the plank of center-state relations. Palkhivala blamed the members of parliament for allowing the steady erosion of the powers of the states over the years and their arrogation by the central government.

Citing a number of instances in sup-

port of his views, Palkhivala said that the states today enjoyed even less powers than the second-class native states did during the British colonial rule. He attributed this to the distortion the constitution had been subjected to since its inception. Palkhivala added, "Let us return men who have the good of the country at heart and not those who fight for their own political survival and for politics is bread and butter."

copyright or his assignee. This applied to cassettes lent purely for domestic viewing.

Every library owner not only has to have a license, to be obtained within four weeks of the promulgation of the ordinance, but the films put on tape have to have a certificate from the Board of Censors.

Myth Behind VHP's Silent Majority

VELU ANNAMALAI

During the last few months so much has been said and written about the wonderful and beneficial effects of the Ekatmata Yagnas, organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and interpreted as an integration rite beyond caste and religion. But one needs to study the VHP organization, and the real purpose of these marches.

VHP was formed in a hurry about two years ago when several thousands of untouchables in Tamil Nadu, who had been exploited, discriminated and treated as subhumans by fellow human beings for generations under the full sanction and authority of Hinduism, embraced Islam as their religion. One of the main purposes, if not the only purpose, of VHP was to stop these poor untouchables from finding a religion that would treat them as human beings. What it means is that the Hindus cannot stand someone leaving their barbarous religion even if that is a life-saving mission for those people concerned.

India Today says that the soul of VHP is indeed the Hindu religious party RSS and everybody is aware that RSS is the inspiration behind the yatras. The 50,000 volunteers directly in charge of the yatras have undoubtedly had training in RSS camps.

One Hindu says that the purpose of the yatras is to unite all Hindus without their caste barriers. I would like to know what these Hindus and their organizations were doing when several hundred untouchables were murdered, raped and their properties looted by the so-called upper caste Hindus. If these devout Hindus wanted to eradicate the evil caste system and save the untouchables from the Hindu tyranny, they should have gone to the help of those untouchables when they desperately needed it. Instead these Hindus went to save the lives of the cows. After all the lives of the cows are much more important to the Hindus than the lives of the untouchables, according to the teachings of the Hindu religion.

During these yatras, the Hindus may have even treated some of the untouchables as touchables for that moment, just as they did after the famous Meenakshipuram conversion. But the very next day, the untouchables were pushed to their permanent place, permanently assigned by their Hindu religion. It has been proved again and again that the life of a Hindu is a life full of lies, arrogance and stupidity. The Hindus burn with hatred

towards their own fellow humans, particularly if they belong to lower castes and other religions.

One VHP supporter said that the caste system and untouchability are alien to the Hindu scriptures. Bhagvad-Gita, the holy book of the Hindu religion, clearly talks about the caste system and how important it is for Hindus to stick to their castes. After naming the four-caste system, and minutely describing the duties of each, the book says: "Better do one's own caste-duty, though devoid of merit than to do another's, however well performed. By doing the work prescribed by his own nature a man meets with no defilement. Never should a man give up the work to which he is BORN, defective though it be." (Chapter 18, verses 47-48)

India Today again says that two famous Sankaracharyas (of Puri and Dwarka) have publicly stated that untouchability should be preserved and followed by all Hindus. Last year, the trustees of the Jagannath temple at Puri foiled a plan by the Sankaracharya to stop Indira Gandhi from entering the temple because she had married a Parsi. Again, Dr Karan Singh, a devout Hindu and a founder member of VHP said that he was not seeking any modification of the caste system. "Caste is too much a part of Indian consciousness to be eliminated," he said. If this is the real state of affairs, whom are the VHP kidding?

L.R.Balley says in his book, Untouchability - Will It Vanish: "Caste cannot be abolished by intercaste dinners or stray instances of intercaste marriages. Caste is a state of mind. It is a disease of the mind. The teachings of the Hindu religion are the root cause of the disease. We practice casteism and we observe untouchability because we are enjoined to do so by the Hindu religion in which we live. A bitter thing can be sweet. The taste of anything can be changed. But poison cannot be turned into nectar."

The caste system cannot be abolished by yatras, pilgrimages, public meetings, and pujas. As a matter of fact, the caste system will be more vigorously practiced by these methods. The system will die only with the death of Hinduism. In the meantime, if the sufferers of the caste system want to escape from this obnoxious caste system, they should kick the Hindu religion, and embrace any of the other religions that treat everyone as equal and most of all as simple human beings.

Gnanaratham In a Small Town

SEKHAR RAMAKRISHNAN

The impact of Vishwa Hindu Parishad's processions on relations between Hindus and Muslims can be seen in the following incident, which took place in a small town in Tamil Nadu. The incident was small compared to the big riots that take place elsewhere but shows the direction in which communal relations are headed if VHP flourishes.

On January 16 at Puthanatham near Trichy, violence broke out when a 2,000-strong procession was taken out by Hindu Munnani volunteers. The procession was to celebrate the first anniversary of the visit of Gnanaratham to that town.

According to the police, when the procession was passing through the street where the local mosque is located, some of the marchers wanted to enter the mosque. The police prevented this and were pelted with stones and brickbats. Among those injured were the assistant collector, the DSP, and an inspector.

According to VHP, the police action was unprovoked. Their intention was never to enter the mosque. When the procession was going near the mosque, a sub-inspector assaulted some of the marchers. When they squatted on the road protesting this, the police resorted to unprovoked lathicharge and dispersed them.

Book on Dalit Christians

A recent book, The Twice Alienated: Culture of Dalit Christians, by Dr K.Wilson (pub. Booklinks, Hyderabad, pp 98, Rs 60), develops the theme that dalit Christians are alienated both under the Hindu as well as Christian religions. While the former segregates them socially leading to untouchability and dehumanization, the latter, while promising salvation and an escape to its followers, in actual fact subtly encourages them to bow to oppressive forces.

Dr Wilson speaks from his personal experience as the son of a poor rural Christian pastor and his involvement as a churchman for more than 20 years.

Dr Wilson says that caste discrimination does exist within all denominations of Christianity in India, though it might be on an economic and social level. Though there are numerous seminaries and theological centers in India, none of them have taken up the challenge of caste discrimination within the Christian community itself as a serious matter for theological reflection, social analysis and action.

Civil Liberties in Bihar

[At the civil liberties conference held at Patna on October 2, 1983 the following report on "Challenges before Civil Liberties movement in Bihar" was adopted. The report was presented by Mr. Shashi Bhushan on behalf of the Bihar State Secretariat of People's Union of Civil Liberties. The conference was inaugurated by Mr. V.M. Tarkunde and attended by, among others, representatives of Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee, Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (Bombay) and the Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (Calcutta).]

Bihar presents an agonising situation in all matters—human and democratic. It is a State where a majority of the people are denied the fundamental rights to expression, association and assembly.

Under these conditions the Bihar Government's amendments to the IPC and CRPC, better known as Bihar Press Bill, were only an attempt to curb further the people's minimum rights to expression through the newspapers. Fortunately, under the pressure of a mass movement to which the PUCL (Bihar) and other organisations gave their wholehearted support, the Government was obliged to withdraw the notorious Bill. We feel the anti-Bill movement led to an advancement of civil rights awareness, which has not yet developed in some other states. The Bihar Press continues to be vigilant but certainly, to secure its freedom, it would have to accord priority and space to the problems, anxieties and sufferings of the vast majority of the people, who seem to be defenceless.

People are bundled up and thrown into fire or swift flowing rivers (as in Jamshedpur). Hands and feet tied to a fast driving jeep, they can be dragged on the road until they die (Chaibasa). Pregnant women can be raped by half a dozen policemen until abortion and a painful death some days later (Santhal Parganas). People can be irremediably

crippled after serving jail terms of 20–30 years without trial (Rudal Sah and many other); or can be dehumanized in the prisons without enjoying minimum rights.

The first task for government should be prevention of death from hunger. But what has been happening? A large number of harijans and tribals and other impoverished people have been dying in Deoghar, Mohanpur and other blocks of Santhal Parganas, in parts of Palamau, in Hazaribagh and other districts.

Death is also stalking the towns. Factories have been closed as a result of the flight of the owners and the workers are left to pass days and months in hunger in the hope of government takeover. Not very long ago, about 400 workers of Katihar Jute Mill died of hunger after the closure. About 150 workers of Kumar-dhubi Engineering Works, Dhanbad, were starved to death in the last three years of closure following the flight of the owners. The decision on a Government take-over of this factory has been pending for the last one year. Similar is the case of Ashok Paper Mills, and yet another case is that of Chitra Coalfield Mines. After all, of what use are the Industrial Disputes Act and Labor law?

A survey of the Bihar's industrial field will reveal that both the managements and the government machinery are everywhere ill at ease with those trade unionists whose integrity is above doubt. On the other hand, National Security Act, Bihar Control of Crimes Act, Essential Services Maintenance Act, etc., are being freely used against trade union organisers. At the irrigation workshop of the Bihar Government at Dehri-on-Sone in Rohtas district the workers detected a big theft of materials involving senior engineers but what the workers got as reward was suspension for some, mass transfer, demotion from technical cadres to orderlies and peons.

There have been several firings by the police killing many students in the name

of law and order. Students have not been allowed to assemble and voice protest. Students showing black flags to the Chief Minister were fired at by a Goonda gang in the very presence of a large police force parading in Muzaffarpur. Police repression against the students all over the state has assumed such proportions that all the student unions of the universities have come to form a joint front in order to mount pressure on the Government to restrain it.

Women in general in this backward state are oppressed and underpaid everywhere—be it village farms or services in the towns. Reservation of jobs for them in the state sector is not faithfully adhered to. They are regularly harassed at their workplaces, on the roads, on the buses and trains. Thousands of jobs of poor women at collieries of Coal India Ltd. have been seized by what has come to be known as mafia-gangs.

Dowry is far more widespread and deep-rooted in Bihar than in other States. Every day the news papers carry tales of murder of one helpless daughter-in-law or another.

The Government has been sending bad, corrupt and cruel officers in the field where weaker sections are concerned. The laws relating to distribution of land, occupancy rights and harvested parganas have been stalled. The measure of implementation of agricultural minimum wages can be judged from the single instance of even the ex-Chief Minister denying the official rates to the laborers on his farms at Saharsa. What the state through its officials and politicians did was to unleash atrocities on the weaker sections and their organizations who only pressed the Government to do what it has been promising to do.

In Singhbhum hundreds of huts of adivasis were burnt to ashes; village after village were set ablaze by the police and forest officials. Only recently a gruesome and mysterious massacre of 15 tribals was

reported from the districts in the Kolhan area. Denied even their customary rights to use of forests the adivasis are blamed for the crimes committed by contractors. In Santhal Parganas hordes of policemen in league with land-grabbers have fired upon adivasis, tortured them and indulged in mass rape in dozens of villages during the last few years. In the districts of central Bihar hundreds of police camps have been set up in order to "extinguish" the so-called peasant unrest, and peasant organizations. And just as almost all the leaders of peasant organizations in Bhojpur district were shot dead in fake encounters during the Emergency, the state has launched an extermination campaign in Patna, Gaya, Aurangabad, Nawada, Samastipur, Madhubani, Nalanda and other districts. No less than a hundred peasant organizers or those who could dare to speak among poor persons have been killed in fake encounters during the last three years. This excludes about a thousand so-called anti-social elements who have been done to death by the police or "the villagers" in so-called encounters in the state during the last five years.

Only an independent inquiry commission can find what is behind the cold-blooded killings that are openly allowed in the name of encounters. An independent and permanent tribunal should be set up with constitutional sanctions. Legislation on the line is urgently called for, with terms and powers to enquire suomot into any killing reported by the police as having occurred in an encounter.

(continued on page 11)

Bonded Laborer's Plea to High Court

K.Gurusamy, a runaway bonded laborer from Kunrathur near Madras, has filed a writ petition in Madras High Court to gain the freedom of his wife and two children.

Gurusamy says in his petition that he and his family were coming to Madras from Salem in search of work in 1981 when on the way his son met with an accident. A Good Samaritan, Tirunavukkarasu, took the child to the hospital for treatment but put in a condition that the whole family should work in his quarry at Kunrathur until the debt amounting to Rs 2,000 was paid off.

At the quarry, Gurusamy found hundreds like him bonded to the quarry owner. Families were bonded by documents alluding fictitious debts that could never be paid off. They were not allowed to leave the site. Children were kept locked up in rooms to prevent the families running away.

In desperation, Gurusamy feigned illness and left for Madras ostensibly for medical treatment. His complaints to the DIG of police and his efforts to meet the chief minister were in vain. Hence the writ petition.

Chandrachud on Caseload Before Court

The swarm of thousands of petitions has destroyed the creativity of the judges and seriously affected the character and caliber of the judges, Chief Justice Y.V.Chandrachud said in New Delhi on January 13.

He asked lawyers to accept the judges' suggestion to drop oral arguments in at least certain matters, like a case that had been decided in the same way by three lower courts. Such matters could be decided by judges sitting in chambers or at home. "If you insist on oral hearing in all matters, you shall have destroyed the system," he warned.

He was against curtailment of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to speed up justice. This was a wrong remedy. With no good lawyer to accept judgeship, the quality of judgments in lower courts are falling constantly. Therefore the Supreme Court must be able to examine the judgments. But he said appeals must be restricted to one in each case.

The Chief Justice suggested setting up tribunals, especially service tribunals at state levels and one national tribunal for appeals.

Hiren Gohain

Tales of Terror

On November 8, at about 11:30 PM, a police party called on him and took him away under a false excuse. His relations at home were assured that he would be sent back within 10 minutes. But when he reached Chandmari police outpost, the police simply fell upon him and rained blows on him. He was interrogated and beaten up by turns for about 4 hours and then taken away to the Gauhati Railway Station at around 3 in the morning. He was kept in the lock-up of the railway police for the whole day. Next day, the police secured the orders of an Executive Magistrate (one Sindhri) to detain him for a week of interrogation. Dutta was taken away to a lonely police station in the outskirts of the town with special detention cells.

There Dutta was interrogated every night from about 7 PM to 3 AM from 11/9/83 to 11/14/83 by a group of 'experts.' The ritual of interrogation took this form. Every night on arrival this group of experts treated themselves to food and drink, especially drink, supplied by the police station. Then they had Dutta bound to the iron bars of the cell in a sitting position with a bamboo rod under his knees and his hands pinioned. Then the experts took turns in small groups in pulling him by the hair, kicking him viciously in the loins, on his chest and back, at his sides. They aimed karate blows on his helpless figure, pushed needles up and down inside his nails, and pushed pins down on his neck and shoulders. Dutta would scream in agony until he would collapse. Then they would revive him by throwing cold water on his head and face and start a curious rehearsal.

They would force him to learn by heart and repeat answers to certain incriminating questions. If Dutta kept silent or hesitated, there would be a fresh round of torture. Two huge taperecorders would then be switched on, and the question-answer session began in real earnest. Any mistake or lapse on Dutta's part

would make them switch the recorder off and resume the inhuman proceedings already mentioned. A favorite variation was beating him mercilessly on the soles of his feet or trampling on his fingers and toes with heavy boots. Led by an officer whom his colleagues called 'Jabar Lal Das' this group of interrogators would compel Dutta to confess the commissions of crimes of which he sometimes has not heard, complicity with people some of whom he does not know. Every night toward the early hours of the morning, they left Dutta half-dead with pain, fear, and grief. He would then be handcuffed and dragged back to the cell to lie on a heap of his own vomit, urine, and feces.

On the day of the Prime Minister's visit to Gauhati, the police thugs did not torture him, presumably out of concern for the PM's security. But on the following day from about 3 PM the interrogation started, and it was so brutal and painful that at 2:30 Dutta fell into a dead faint. He also vomited blood. The doctor of the police department was called in, and he ordered immediate removal to the hospital. Accordingly, Dutta was admitted to the Gauhati Medical College Hospital on 11/14/83, where he was slowly and painfully gasping back to normal health, a process that may take months. Incidentally, he could not be produced before the Executive Magistrate on 11/15/83 as he was very obviously 'indisposed.' The question is why has this murderous farce been played at all? Has the government or the police become so desperate to prove that they have cracked the Assam extremists' plans? Or are they trying to manufacture evidence for providing an excuse for even more draconian laws? Either way their intention can hardly be squared with their public claim of having brought the movement under control. On the contrary, it bears disturbing witness to a cynical plan to exploit the movement for other ends.

from FRONTIER

The Assam police has victimized people who by no stretch of imagination can be considered as involved in any violent activity, for instance retired and elderly people, mothers with babies not yet weaned, children. There have also been incidents of the police running amok in areas that have not witnessed any violent activity at all. For example, the only offense of the Veterinary College students, teachers and employees in Khanapara seems to have been a lusty chorus of denunciations that reached the Prime Minister's ears when she was making a speech near the campus. Apart from entering and ransacking teachers' quarters and beating up their wives, the police took the unprecedented step of dragging out of bed the Dean of the College of Veterinary Science, which is part of the Assam Agricultural University. He was not only put under arrest but subjected to brutal and humiliating beating during detention.

One incident that has come to my knowledge has filled me with foreboding. It so happens that I know the person concerned and am convinced he is innocent of all those wild allegations foisted on him.

CASE OF JITEN DUTTA

Jiten Dutta is a young student of Gauhati College, and has been the assistant general secretary of the college union. While a supporter of the movement, he has never been ardent in his support. Whenever in my discussions with him, I had drawn his attention to some of the negative features of the movement, he appeared genuinely worried and sometimes bewildered. Apart from studies, he has much work to do at home. He always struck me as a nice, pleasant young man who did not bear ill-will against anyone. It is this very young man who now has been charged with murder, manufacture and detonation of bombs causing grievous loss of life, conspiracy against the state under sections 302/307/326/427/120(B) of IPC.

Promise and Reality In Orissa Village

CHANCHAL SARKAR

Move to a mud-and-thatch room in Ghardhara village in Kalahandi, a backward part of a backward state, Orissa. Of the people gathered there from a dozen villages quite a number were gatis, bonded laborers. They have heard of the law (Bonded Labor Act) that entitles them to freedom and also to help (Rs 60 a month) towards economic rehabilitation. In fact, much of it is eyewash. Even when the district authorities can be prodded to investigate and make lists of the bonded, nothing happens — except that the bondsman's lot becomes harder. The feudal forces decide that he'll get no work and no loans. Sometimes they are able to stop the village shops from selling him his elementary provisions. Even the Rs 500 or so a year that a gati was paid seems better than his present plight. Thousands of bonded laborers have been identified in eight blocks in Sambalpur and Kalahandi. The lists nest in collectors' offices, the proceedings creep and are foiled at every step by the landlords. In the meantime the struggle for a livelihood is grim.

FOISTED CASE

Change the props and you are in the open air in the village of Paramanandapur in Sambalpur. The group of people who face you have formed a registered body (Jaibharat Sramik Sangh). They decided to present a memorandum of complaints to the chief minister who was about to visit some places nearby. This wasn't liked, so the police nabbed the head of the Sangh and his main colleagues and put them in the cooler till the chief minister left the area and then a false case was filed against them. So every now and again they have to make a long trek to the Padampur SDO's court, crossing two swollen nallahs, taking a bus and losing a day's earnings. In seven months these people had been summoned to the court seven times but the police had not even been able to frame charges. What this highlights is an eternal verity of India's rural scene: the police are almost invari-

ably on the side of the feudal and monied elements of the village and can never be counted on to protect the poor. Most laborers are cheated of the statutory minimum wages — the standard response if they cite the government and the law is, "Then go to the government." Neither police nor the courts lift a finger. Here is an idea of the earnings: a woman gets one rupee for a hundred bundles of kendu leaves. On the average no one can put together more than two hundred bundles a day.

COMMUNAL FARM

Move the scene now to a very attractive glade in Tikrapara where a cluster of people are planting bamboo, mango, myrobalam, jackfruit and mohua on a 13.5 acre plot. The land is communal and it all looks very idyllic — until you come to know how much struggle was necessary to get the land freed. Those who work among village folk say that communal land and fish ponds can take care of a large chunk of a village's needs. But it is very common in Orissa for the rich and powerful to occupy government land and use it as personal property. This is what had happened in Tikrapara. When the landless objected and a Land Entitlement Survey Group came to inspect, the rich hired goons to bash up the agitators. At least one of them had been so badly knocked about that he was unable to work when I saw him, which was quite a while later. Others had been scared enough to quit the landless's organization. But eventually the voluntary village committee prevailed and they were drifting back.

CORRUPTION

The last scene focuses on the road as we were jeeping to Kharia. We found a number of villagers we had met at Ghardhara walking to meet the MLA because the BDO had said that the MLA's signature was needed for all job-orders. There were some public works projects —

bunding, road building and such like — in their villages and they wanted to ask the BDO to allot some to their associations. The people nurse hope eternally in their breasts but to no purpose because the BDO is often the most corrupt of officials. Any work that he gives is to contractors for a consideration and the local MLA and MP very often get a cut.

There are some positive signs of change. Lallo and Bilasini in Paramnandapur were proof that the women are not so docile and unprotesting as once they were. In fact women in these backward districts have prevented tree-felling as their sisters in the Chipko movement have done, only there hasn't been any publicity. Some voluntary organizations like Ox-fam are working among the rural poor but they can at any moment be dubbed agents provocateur or CIA.

IRONY

What is ironic is that what the rural poor petition for are theirs by law or government declaration. The minimum wage is statutory, bonded labor is abolished by Act, rural employment is pledged under the 20-point program. The same program talks about rehabilitating bonded labor, allotting housing sites to rural families, afforestation, etc.

These honeyed promises don't really wash with the people. The proceedings in the Assembly, the politicking in the ruling party and in the feeble Opposition have no meaning for them either. Work is what they want most of all. What I wonder as I see them is why are they so patient, so infinitely deferential?

Hameshwar Banchor of Tikrapara had been threatened several times after he stood up for the communal land. Tall and well-built, he had tied his shirt round his waist and strode homewards after bidding us goodbye. "He would look well with a gun," said my companion. He would indeed.

(excerpted from the Indian Express)

KARNATAKA FARMERS AGITATE

The Karnataka Farmers Association began an agitation on Jan 26 demanding among other things, higher prices for agricultural produce, the establishment of a state Agricultural Prices Commission and abolition of the Fragmentation of the Land Act. Farmers blocked railway lines and courted arrests; over 27,000 were held with many released later.

Karnataka's Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde of Janata Party urged the Association on Jan 30 to halt the agitation and come to the negotiating table. According to Hegde, his government had always been sympathetic to the genuine demands of the farmers and its doors were open to a dialogue to resolve outstanding problems.

In an editorial, the Indian Express points out that a rival association headed by CPM, claiming to represent small and marginal farmers, has dissociated itself from the agitation. The editorial believes that the movement is led by rich farmers who chose this time for their agitation because Hegde is under considerable pressure from Congress(I).

Former Manipur CM Shot Dead

The former chief minister of Manipur, Yangmasho Shaiza, was assassinated in broad daylight on the lawns of his residence in Imphal on January 30.

One of two gunmen kept guard at the gate while the other shot 60-year-old Shaiza from point blank range twice in the chest as he was talking to two party-men from his Ykhrol constituency, official sources said.



Violent Attacks on Dhulla Adivasis

ANAND AGASHE

The low-caste laborers, Adivasis and minorities in the northern parts of Dhulia district in Maharashtra are living in a nightmare. The organized violence let loose on them during the last two months may erupt again if steps are not taken immediately, according to Kumar Shiralkar, an activist with the Shramik Sanghatana for over a decade.

Gangs of the Patit Pawan Sanghatana (organization for the salvation of the fallen) are responsible for the recent atrocities. Shiralkar says communal elements and kulaks in various parties — including BJP, Janata and Congress — patronized the gangs.

On December 20, an armed gang broke into Ustad Ramzan's house and beat him to death. On December 14, an Adivasi settlement at Mamache Mohide, just outside Shahada, was completely destroyed by a mob of 400, raising slogans hailing Shivaji and PPS.

A month later, the terrified Adivasis were still hiding in the fields adjoining Shahada. Police have made no arrests.

BACKGROUND

Ten years back, the situation was much worse, Shiralkar recalls. Over the last decade, the laborers have gained courage and confidence. Under the Sanghatana banner, they had successfully challenged the oppressive measures of the landlords.

The farmers had frequent attempts to organize militias. The first in 1973 was by P.K.Patil, the present vice-president of Janata in the state, and called Purushottam Sena (named after himself). Its formation created a furor all over the state and it had to be disbanded.

A couple of years later, the landlords tried to recruit Baluchi watchmen; that attempt too failed due to public resistance.

NEW THREAT

The PPS's emergence was therefore welcomed by the rich farmers, Shiralkar says. It has its roots in religious revivalism and therefore served as a front for communal elements to perpetuate their policy of hatred against minorities and low-caste Hindus. Secondly it serves the class interests of the rich farmers.

Shiralkar accuses the local BJP leaders of overtly supporting PPS. A sizeable chunk of the group is lumpen elements with no ideological strings or direct vested interests who always come in handy as henchmen.

The Shramik Sanghatana grew in strength last year due to its work on the workers' wages. The state government announced a hike in February 1983, but the landlords would not pay accordingly. The Sanghatana organized strikes in various villages around Shahada and succeeded in extracting arrears of Rs 100,000 from the landlords within 10 months.

Apparently unable to stomach this defiance, the landlords let loose a reign of terror, says Shiralkar, and enumerates seven major incidents in the last two months to substantiate the point.

Central Minister Forcibly Occupying Allahabad House

Allahabad High Court has ordered the district magistrate of Azamgarh to get vacated within one week the house "forcibly occupied" by Union Minister of State Kalpana Rai some time ago after it had been "illegally allotted" to him by the District Supply Officer there.

Allowing a writ petition in this connection, Justice Dhaon further ordered that the house be restored to the petitioner, Rom Palat Singh, a UP government official, whose family had been living in the house as a tenant.

Agnivesh: Over 10,000 Bonded Laborers In Faridabad

Swamy Agnivesh, the President of Rashtriya Khan Mazdoor Union, told reporters in New Delhi on Feb. 5 that "a large incidence of bonded labor system in its worst form still exists in Faridabad district of Haryana." According to Agnivesh, there are at least 10,000 migrant workers engaged as bonded laborers in stone quarries in 3 Faridabad villages — Sarai, Anangpur and Lakkarpur.

27 Years Old, 17 In Bondage

Aiyavoo, 27, and Chandran, 28, left Tamil Nadu 17 years ago and joined as quarry workers in Basobhi in Jhansi district, Madhya Pradesh, intending to earn their livelihood there. The moment they borrowed Rs 1,500 from quarry contractor Vijayaram they became bonded laborers.

Armed guards keep a strict vigil over the quarry and tight security has been provided around the contractor's bungalow. Even a visitor falls prey to the contractor. The father of a worker from Tamil Nadu, who paid a visit to Basobhi, never returned. He is still sweating under the hot sun there in the quarry.

A meager amount of Rs 22 was paid to the worker as salary for breaking a rock, which consumed about two days. At the most he could burst four rocks per week — this too was possible only if all the dynamite exploded — earning a total of Rs 88 a week. From this he had to shell out Rs 40 to his assistant, Rs 10 for sharpening the chisel and Rs 18 for purchasing coke and dynamite.

Finding it unbearable, Aiyavoo and Chandran approached another contractor so they could switch jobs. While returning, they were intercepted by Govindram's goondas and locked up for two days. Their wives were taken away and

Agnivesh added that in these villages which are within 10 miles range of New Delhi, quarry laborers mostly the so-called untouchables and tribals from UP, Bihar, Rajasthan and Maharashtra were not only subject to humiliation but also to exploitation by private contractors. Agnivesh charged that the Haryana government had not taken steps to rehabilitate the laborers living in bondage in violation to all government rules.

kept by Govindram and his men for their sexual pleasure; the women were also tortured.

From then on, Aiyavoo and Chandran were made to work for a cut in wages. And they had to agree to their wives being kept by the contractor.

"Go to MGR, appraise him of our plight, he will rescue all of us," Encouraged by their wives' firm belief that Chief Minister M.G.Ramachandran will lend a helping hand, Aiyavoo and Chandran escaped from the quarry at dead of night, trekked 35 km through jungles, boarded a train at Jhansi and reached Madras on November 20.

But they were not able to get in touch with the chief minister as he was too busy with the programs he had with film artistes. After running from pillar to post, the two landed in the cottage of Samathuva Samudaya Iyakkam chief Y.David.

David took the workers along with P.Manoharan and Sivaprakasam, Tamil Nadu Quarry Workers' Association to Uttar Pradesh and got the families released from the quarries.

(source: Indian Express)

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Committee on South Asian Women

The Committee on South Asian Women has decided to begin publishing a bulletin, which is to come out four times a year from the University of California, San Diego. During 1983, the committee published a newsletter.

According to an announcement, the committee is "a rallying point for individuals and groups in Canada and the US working with, doing research or just interested in South Asian women in South Asia and/or in North America."

"The committee will keep as exhaustive track as possible of all such individuals, all relevant publications and all relevant media resources. If you are such

an individual and would like to become part of the network, write for a questionnaire, so that YOU can be included."

Subscriptions to the bulletin cost \$8 for students or unemployed, \$12 for others, and \$20 for institutions. The bulletin will be sent free to other women's groups as well as to groups and individuals in South Asia.

The contact address is:

Jyotsna Vaid, Coordinator
Committee on South Asian Women
Dept of Psychology, C-009
University of California at San Diego
La Jolla California 92093

Montreal Group Delivers Dowry Petition to PM

Nilambri Singh, member of the Executive Council of the Montreal South Asia Community Centre, an organization for women from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, delivered petitions to the Indian Prime Minister recently. The petitions called for strict punishment for the perpetrators of the ghastly dowry murders as well as for more stringent application of the moribund Dowry Prohibition Act.

Xeroxed copies of the petitions were handed over to the Dahej Virodhi Chetna Manch, an umbrella organization of women's organizations whose sole purpose is abolition of dowry and an end to the murders of women because of dowry.

Many women's groups throughout India were informed of the petition drive by SACC and they all responded favorably. They felt their hands strengthened by the solidarity and concern of their compatriots and friends living in North America.

Math Prof Charged in Dowry Death

A college professor near Coimbatore has been charged with the dowry-death of his wife, a physics professor. The death had initially been termed a suicide by local police; a relentless agitation by the girl's parents as well as Pennurimai Iyakam, a women's organization, led to a re-investigation.

Nagammal, 35, was found dead hanging at her residence at Thennampalayam, Tiruppur, in July 1982. Her husband, Prof. Muniappan, was arrested two years later and was finally charged with the murder this January.

In a "suicide" note, the victim was alleged to have written that "she and her stomach ache alone were responsible for her death." But on forensic examination, it was found that the "signature" at the bottom of the letter did not agree with the body of the letter. There was also evidence that the woman was subject to physical torture by the husband, using burning cigarette ends.

Eve-Teaser's Punishment Increased

The Supreme Court has enhanced the sentence on a young man for pressing the breasts of a teenage girl, injuring her and causing abrasions.

The Madras High Court had given him only a fine of Rs 400 for the offense, up from Rs 200 levied by the District Court. The Supreme Court ordered the man to serve a year of rigorous imprisonment besides the fine.

Justices Fazal Ali, A. Varadarajan and R.N. Misra explained that normally the court did not interfere in cases where fine had been imposed. But this was "one of those extraordinary and exceptional cases which has shocked our conscience," they said. "If the offenders in such cases go unnoticed and are allowed to be lightly dealt with, it would cause grave and substantial misgiving of justice."

Rajasthan Police Fire on Rape Protesters

Police opened fire on villagers at Naukan in Alwar district of Rajasthan. At least three were killed and many injured in this incident and earlier incidents in the area.

The unrest was due to the rape and robbery of a 25-year-old housewife of Kotputli town on the Delhi-Jaipur National Highway on January 25 by two policemen.

The police station of Kotputli came under intense stone-throwing and arson, leading to police firing in which three died and many were injured. About 5,000 people are estimated to have attacked the police station.

The two constables have since confessed to their crime and are in police custody. The state government has ordered a judicial inquiry.

Mothers of Dowry Victims on Hunger Strike

Mothers whose daughters were allegedly the victims of dowry deaths went on a hunger strike on January 30 outside Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's residence in New Delhi. They were demanding probes into dowry deaths and stricter laws to punish the culprits.

Rambeti of Agra, mother of one victim Shanti, started the hunger strike to demand justice for her daughter's death. Soon several other bereaved mothers joined the relay fast, including Hirodevi Khandelwal of Dariba Kalan, Laxmi Devi of Shadipur, Prem Singhal of Green Park, Moorti Devi of Golf Links, and Laxmi Devi of New Raju Nagar, Ghaziabad.

The women's demands include that all these cases should be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation and a special cell set up for new investigations. The culprits should be held in custody during the investigation so that they don't interfere with the judicial process.

Though Indira Gandhi assured the women that the cases would be looked into, the parents are continuing the agitation as they are unsatisfied with "mere verbal assurances." When women's representatives asked the PM what assurances she could give these mothers, Indira Gandhi replied, "How can a hunger strike help?"

Stewardess vs Indian Airlines

A stewardess with the Indian Airlines has filed suit in Madras High Court seeking to overturn a decision of the IA management denying her the use of legal advice in an inquiry being conducted against her.

Pushpa Iyengar, the stewardess, claims that some Indian Airlines officials are out to get her dismissed and got an inquiry instituted. But while management was advised by a lawyer, she was not allowed the same facility.

FILM REVIEW

From Dreams To Reality

JABBAR PATEL

[Jabbar Patel, the promising maker of such films as Samna, Simhasan and his latest, Subah, describes the evolution of cinema from purely escapist froth to portraying harsh reality without intimidating audiences.]

Cinema today is one of the most important influences on Indian life. A powerful medium, it has made a deeper impact on social and cultural values than anybody has cared to analyse. It has become a part of the Indian psyche and a subtle leveller. At the same time, the cruel fact is that cinema is commerce, and has been so from the moment of its birth. While commercialization is the curse of any performing art, cinema is the greatest slave to such compulsions.

Right from the start, Hindi cinema, or, for that matter, most commercial regional cinema, sold dreams; dreams that had no relevance to prevalent social, cultural and economic reality. These were not ideological dreams; nor dreams of the ambitious to inspire the viewer to work harder, rise higher. These were exotic dreams which dulled the senses and provided a heady escape even from the small but necessary dreams of real life. Perhaps, this was in consonance with the Indian ethos, for are we not all great dreamers, with work and reality taking second place in our philosophy?

In the beginning, cinema burgeoned under the impact of theatre, especially the Parsi theatre. When sound came, the Indian film became a "talkie" in the most literal sense. It remained essentially so till Pather Panchali appeared on the scene. It was the first Indian film to depart from the traditional trading in dreams and to establish direct rapport with the awesome reality around. It was real cinema, transcending the bounds of a mere "talkie".

Not that there was no serious Indian cinema before Satyajit Ray and Pather Panchali. New Theatre had produced films oriented to literature. But their first loyalty was to the latter. Prabhat Talkies of Pune had made films which had a strong social orientation with powerful contemporary themes.

RAY'S PATHER PANCHALI

But the place of Pather Panchali is unique in the history of Indian cinema, and I doubt whether we have ever surpassed that critical landmark. The film gave a totally new dimensions to each aspect of film-making—camera technique, acting, location, script, everything. The impact of this film has been so profound that, even today, young Indian directors in search of new cinematic avenues cannot wipe out its impress. Ray himself made excellent films after Pather Panchali but none of them has bettered it in terms of freshness or trend.

Thirty years after this film was made, I still cannot watch it without being profoundly affected. And when I screened Pather Panchali for a film society at Daund, a small taluka town near Pune where I work, without any introduction to the rural audience nursed on Bombay Hindi films, I was amazed to see the rapt involvement of the viewers. They came out of the hall visibly moved.

Today, a band of young directors, exposed to Ray's as well as East European films, are trying to break new ground. They admire Ray but they want to do better. But, as yet, their impact has not excelled that of Ray. We are still stuck at Pather Panchali, and have yet to reach another milestone.

MRINAL SEN'S POLITICAL FILMS

Another towering film-maker who has lent a new dimension to Indian cinema is Mrinal Sen. His are truly political films. One may not like them, but they are patently his own and he has not followed Ray's tracks. He is not the master of the craft that Ray is, his films are erratic and highly personal, but his sincerity and commitment are beyond doubt. While he

gives us real political cinema, borne out of deep commitment, others give us only reactions which, at the most, are superficial, without the underlying strand of honesty that is the strength of Mrinal Sen's films.

EXPERIMENTATION BY YOUNG

Having said this, one cannot ignore the experimentation that is now going on among several young directors with new ideas. They can be divided into those who indulge in pure experiment without caring a damn either for audience or the commercial aspect, and those who are struggling to evolve a blend that will satisfy their artistic urge, grapple with reality and yet cater for the commercial demands of the medium. A sub-category of the latter class regards "anti-establishmentism" as the hallmark of cinematic art.

Mani Kaul and Kumar Sahani are intelligent film-makers. They are still experimenting. Their films are important exercises, but these exercises themselves cannot be called achievements. Neither could these exercises be said to have set a trend, though they may have affected other film-makers in bits and pieces.

In the second category are such directors as Shyam Benegal, Girish Kasarwalli, Girish Karnad, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Govind Nihalani, B.V. Karanth, Aravindan, M.S. Sathyu. Helped by the NFDC and financial institutions, a number of young film-makers have arrived on the scene with new ideas. Their work bears a personal stamp. And a section of the box-office, wary of the crassness of commercial cinema, is flocking to their films. The educated middle-class and the sensitive film-goer now have films to which they can relate.

REALISM IN CINEMA

The achievement of these film-makers is that they have made the simple narrative film based on contemporary themes easily acceptable even to common audiences. The same audiences which bought the exotic and escapist dreams of Hindi cinema are now accepting the claims of real life as a subject. Sometimes they seem to prefer a cinema which identifies itself with reality. This, if one may say so, is an extension of Ray's impact.

The roots of such acceptance both by film-makers and their audiences, can be traced to the changing socio-economic and political situation. Before 1947, people had believed that freedom would be the panacea for every ill. Even for some years after independence, they continued to dream that freedom would bring peace, communal harmony, economic and social equality, prosperity and wealth. Freedom was a romantic ideal, and on this was built the classic Hindi cinema.

It was only during the early sixties that disillusionment and a realization of the limitations of freedom set in. What we now see in Indian cinema, or for that matter in Indian literature, is the projection of this socio-economic turmoil, the confusion of ideologies and the struggle to grasp the reality of the situation.

NEED FOR ANOTHER REVOLUTION

The distinguished film-makers mentioned above have prepared the ground from where Indian cinema can really take off. What we need today is another big jolt that will catapult it to greater heights. The present movement has almost reached a dead-end, having played out its role.

Today, Indian cinema is in crisis. Its process of evolution is stuck between two milestones, one crossed 30 years ago and the next yet nowhere in sight. Even cinema as entertainment is being seriously challenged by television and video, which strangle it even as they draw sustenance from it. Awaited is a new film-maker who will make cinema take a quantum leap that will encompass both the technical advancement of the last 30 years and the sharpened sensibilities of the new audiences.

GOVT PRESSURING BIG BANKS

US Top Trading Partner of India

For the first time since 1978-79, India achieved a favorable balance of trade with the US during 1983. India's exports to the US in January-October, 1983, reached a record level of Rs 18 billion while imports from the US were Rs 15 billion giving India a surplus of Rs 3 billion. In 1978-79, India recorded a surplus of Rs 100 million.

Almost 32% of India's exports is accounted for by 4 groups of items - crude from Bombay High, diamonds, ready-made garments and cashewnuts. Exports of crude for the 10 month period were valued at Rs 6.78 billion compared to Rs 3 billion in 1982. Bombay High crude cannot be refined in India. Diamonds accounted for Rs 4.2 billion, garments - Rs 1.8 billion and cashewnuts Rs 600 million. If figures for the last two months in 1983 also followed the trend set by the first 10 months, the two-way trade is likely to exceed Rs 40 billion. Indo-US trade has increased from about Rs 6.8 billion in 1971-72 to Rs 23 billion in 1981-82. The USA accounts for 11% of India's total exports and 12% of India's total imports.

Per Capita Income Decline

Real National income increased by 1.7% during 1982-83, according to an estimate by the Central Statistical Organization. In contrast, the income growth for 1981-82 was 4%. Gross National Product (GNP) rose in constant prices of 1970-71 to Rs 505 billion in 1982-83 from Rs 496 billion in 1981-82. The slowdown in the growth of the real income meant that the per capita income declined during 1982-83 as the population was expected to increase by 2.1% this year. The per capita income for India stands now around Rs 720 per annum. The lower growth in real national income was attributed to the setback in the agricultural sector's performance because of drought in large areas across the country. Food grain production declined by 3.7% from an output of 133.2 million tons to 128.3 million tons in 1982-83.

Ordinance to Protect Public Property

The Prevention of Damage to Public Property Ordinance, promulgated by the President two days after Republic Day, provides for deterrent punishment for damage to public property including transport and telecommunication network and power and oil installations.

Offenders causing such damage will be liable to punishment with rigorous imprisonment ranging between six months and ten years besides fines.

The ordinance is applicable all over the country except Jammu and Kashmir.

RBI Calls 1982-83 Setback for Economy

The Indian economy suffered a "severe setback" in 1982-83 according to the Reserve Bank report on currency and finance. The causes were a sizeable decline in agricultural output and deceleration in industrial growth.

The setback in agriculture resulted from the sharp reduction in kharif production because of severe drought in much of the country. Kharif production declined from 79.4 million tons in 1981-82 to 69.5 million tons in 1982-83. Rice accounted for 6.7 million tons of the decline.

Real national income rose by only 2.1% compared to 5% in 1981-82.

Industrial relations in Tamil Nadu seem to have touched an all-time low. As of the end of January, over 50,000 workers were affected due to closure, lock-outs and strikes in more than 100 industrial units - small, medium and large - all over the state, resulting in an estimated loss of production of nearly Rs 2 billion. Nearly 40% of those affected are located in and around Madras.

In Madras, the Simpson workers went out on strike in mid-November, mainly over wages and the reinstatement of dismissed workers. The government mediated for some time but by January turned hostile to the workers, accusing the unions of politicizing the issues and breaking earlier agreements. On January 29, the union controlled by ADMK announced it was going back to work. The other unions have decided to launch a joint struggle against the "anti-labor policies" of the MGR government. INTUC and HMS continue to support MGR.

The other major struggle in Madras is at B&C Mills, which has a long history of mismanagement. The 8,000 workers went out on strike on January 13 when management refused to pay any bonus and changed work norms.

Other units under strike or lock-out in Madras are Krishna Rao Body Works (1,000 workers), India Forge (700), E-force (200), Southern Alloy Foundries (250), Standard Batteries (240), and

Quality Engineering (200), Rane (1,000), and E.L.D. Parry (900).

In Coimbatore, Tamilnadu Spinning Mills, Padma Mills and Janardhanam Mills have been closed for months rendering jobless nearly 3,000 workers. Over 1,000 workers have also been retrenched in Kandaswami Mills, Erode, and Sundaram Mills, Salem.

KANYAKUMARI RUBBER WORKERS

About 2,000 workers in 143 private rubber plantations in Kanyakumari district have been on strike since October 17. Production loss was estimated at Rs 40 million in January.

Dearness allowance is the bone of contention; the workers have been getting their DA on the Nagercoil price index. When the agreement ended in 1981, the management not only refused to negotiate a new agreement but also stopped paying any DA pending a new settlement. Their contention was that the DA based on the Nagercoil price index was "unscientific" and a bit higher than the DA that was being given to the plantation workers in Kerala.

A local CPM MLA commented: "The contention is ridiculous; the workers are living in Nagercoil and denying them the DA based on the Nagercoil index is tantamount to saying they have to buy food from Patna or Madras."

Plight of Muslims

A recent study by government's Minorities Commission has concluded that the Muslims in India are lagging behind considerably more than other communities in the society in the areas of public employment and education. According to NC Saxena, the Secretary of the Minorities Commission, "educational backwardness is the root cause of their economic backwardness."

Saxena acknowledged that a degree of discrimination existed but noted at the same time that cases of discrimination against Muslims were not common. He held the Muslim leadership responsible for the community's ills, as according to him, they appeared very orthodox in their thinking.

Saxena also agreed that the economic outlook for Muslims appeared bleak if they do not move to further their education. He added that the main efforts must be made by the Muslims. According to one Muslim academic, "Muslim and Hindu secular leaders have been telling Muslims that they are not getting jobs because of discrimination. I do not deny discrimination. We Indians are the most discriminating people on the earth."

8 Laborers Die in Janpath Building Fall

Five laborers were killed and 12 injured, four seriously, when the northern scaffolding of a section of the State Trading Corporation building under construction on Janpath in New Delhi collapsed. Among the dead were two women.

The 27-m high scaffolding was being raised further when the entire structure collapsed suddenly burying underneath a number of workers besides hurling down those working on it.

The building, being constructed by a Calcutta firm, Universal Consortium of Engineers, under the supervision of Engineers India, had been raised to only the 5th floor out of the proposed 23 floors when the accident occurred.

The scaffolding being used in the building was the tubular steel type, instead of the traditional wooden structures. Engineers India had recommended the steel structure as being safer for the workers.

Marked Decline

In Indian Company Growth

The overall performance of 486 companies in 1982-83 showed a marked decline in growth of production from 21.1% in 1981-82 to 9.4% in 1982-83. The study prepared by the Reserve Bank of India also showed a marked drop in sales - from 20.1% to 10.1% and in gross profits from 16.3% to 4.3%. The declining profitability was all the more accentuated considering that 1981-82 itself was a year of low profitability compared with 1980-81.

Corruption in Thanjavur Flood Relief

Large-scale corruption has been reported in the disbursement of cash doles to families that lost their huts in many villages of Thanjavur district in the recent rains in December. An Indian Express correspondent who toured the district found that local AIADMK leaders had taken upon themselves the task of granting the doles. The ruling party's influence was evident in the distribution of saris and dhotis too.

While some partially damaged huts received compensation of Rs 210, the ones fully damaged got only Rs 50. In many places, owners whose houses were very much intact were thankful for the "relief" offered.

It is said the local AIADMK leaders offered full compensation for partially-damaged huts - after deducting a commission of Rs 25-50. These party workers first identify their beneficiaries and then ask the district officials to part with the dole. Meanwhile, thousands of petitions for doles are now pending with many taluk offices and revenue divisional offices.

Vivekananda Express from April

The country's longest-run train linking Jammu Tawi with Kanyakumari will start running on April 1. The distance is 3,913 km, about 2,400 miles.

There will be a second Vivekananda Express as well, covering 3,525 km from Gauhati to Kanyakumari.

Public sector banks are reportedly under considerable pressure to organize "mass loaning functions" in various parts of the country on the pattern of the one held in New Delhi on January 14 when about 40,000 persons were supposedly given credit under the priority lending scheme.

There has been mounting public criticism of the way bank funds were allowed to be spent on such a function, which was run by Rajiv Gandhi.

Directives have since gone to the banks to organize loaning functions in all major cities many of which will be attended by Indira Gandhi or "other important" leaders. Banks have also been told to coordinate the schemes with the chief ministers in the Congress(I)-ruled states.

The Union Deputy Minister for Finance, Janardhan Poojari, who had met bank heads in this regard in early December, had a series of meetings with top bank officials in mid-January.

The Indian Express got hold of a letter by a nationalized bank's deputy general manager to various divisional managers. It reads in part: "I have to inform you of a meeting I had with Sri Poojari, deputy finance minister, on January 9 wherein he asked me and my colleagues in other banks to increase the number of loans per branch to a minimum of one hundred. ...

"1) Each branch shall sanction a minimum of 100 loans; 2) No security shall be insisted upon for the loans; 3) No guarantee shall be insisted upon for loans upto and inclusive of Rs 5,000; and 4) Loans shall not be disbursed now. Borrowers may be identified and loan papers may be processed but the actual disbursement shall take place only after the conclusion of the proposed exhibition to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister at Bombay during the first week of March."

Controversy Over Counting Strength of Unions

The recent enumeration by the central government of the members of different trade unions has proved controversial. The government has carried out the process by open counting while some unions have held that the only way to ascertain membership, free of pressure or manipulation, is through a secret ballot. As a result, CPI's AITUC and CPM's CITU boycotted the tally.

Naturally, INTUC participated, as did BJP's Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh. Surprisingly, in a number of key industries, BMS has come out with larger numbers than INTUC. According to official figures, BMS has a membership of over 300,000 in the Railways while INTUC has fewer than 200,000. Both figures are of dubious value since AIRF, the main union, boycotted the counting. In Posts and Telegraphs, Coal, and state electricity boards, too, BMS has come up with more members than INTUC.

COURT INQUIRY INTO BONDED LABOR IN ANDHRA QUARRIES

The Supreme Court has directed the Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy District collectors to visit the Ellamabanda stone quarries in Andhra Pradesh to inquire into the prevalence of bonded labor as alleged in a petition filed on behalf of a bonded laborer who escaped from the quarries recently.

The petition was in the form of a letter from P.V. Bakthavathalam, president of the Organization for Civil and Democratic Rights, based in North Arcot, Tamil Nadu.

Social Attitudes to Leprosy

The treatment of leprosy victims by society, especially government institutions, has been in the news recently in connection with World Leprosy Day.

Health Minister H.V. Hande of Tamil Nadu spoke on January 31, regretting the unwillingness of doctors to treat leprosy patients. While there are numerous dermatologists available, they are reluctant to do leprosy work, he added. He said the state government was considering a proposal to ask all dermatologists to undergo a year's training in leprosy work before practicing as specialists.

Deepak Rao Moodbidri, in a report in the Indian Express, points to the Leprosy Act of 1893 as the source of much of the legal persecution of leprosy victims. The Act, which was repealed only last January 26, empowered a police officer to drag any person suspected of having leprosy to the nearest magistrate, send that person to the nearest leprosarium, and authorized the asylums to keep the person for life.

While the repeal of the Act has been a big change, a number of other legal and administrative procedures have arisen from the Act, which continue. The Hindu, Muslim and Christian marriage acts allow leprosy as a ground for divorce (the other two grounds for divorce under the Muslim Marriages Act are insanity and a virulent form of venereal disease). The legislation, according to Moodbidri, is based on the false assumption that leprosy is an incurable and hereditary disease. The conjugal leprosy rate is in fact seven percent.

Life Insurance Corporation charges a higher premium rate for leprosy patients. Ironically the average life span of a leprosy victim is longer than that of an ordinary person.

dropped to 1.33 in 1981-82. The output per faculty member — less than one published paper — reflects on the quantitative performance of IIMA faculty. The report points out that one-third or more of the faculty in a given year are not active in research work.

The institute should radically change its curriculum and entrance policy and explore new avenues of research if it wants to retain its position as the country's trend-setting academic institute, according to the report.

Noting with concern the growing tendencies among its graduates to seek jobs in well-managed, well-paying organizations rather than in poorly managed and public sector undertakings, the report suggests not only changing the present policy, which attracts mostly students from the rich class, but also to reorient the curriculum to meet the requirements of the hitherto neglected sectors.

It observes that a typical MBA entrant is male (over 85%), with a degree in engineering or science (75%), under 25 (80%), without any work experience (70%), relatively upper caste or class (80%), having English medium school education, and from large metropolitan cities.

Thus, the entrants tend to come from a small relatively privileged minority and in practice their education at IIMA tends to perpetuate social inequalities.

The admission process thus filters out students from rural areas, poor families and women.

To neutralize this, the committee suggests greater weightage in the admission process to students having work experience, innovative and enterprising leanings and an orientation for change. It would like to make one year of work experience compulsory for admission. The committee analyzed the subject matter of case studies opted for by 120 students, which revealed that nearly 90% related to private sector companies, 8% to the public sector and only 2-3% to development corporations. No one opted for preparing case studies on such vital institutions as government departments, educational institutions, developmental and voluntary organizations, public utilities like railways and electricity boards.

(excerpted from the Indian Express)

"New" Teaching Aids for Mathematics

SEKHAR RAMAKRISHNAN

In an effort to make mathematics more interesting and fascinating, the Vikram Sarabhai Community Science Center in Ahmedabad has reportedly developed a series of self-learning materials for primary school children. Besides their low cost, they can be easily fabricated from locally available materials to suit local needs.

In a survey of one primary school in a village near Ahmedabad, the center found that the dropout rate was highest in the third standard. The reason was found to be difficulty in mastering arithmetic; the children were required to multiply 3-digit numbers by 2-digit numbers. This led the center to develop the self-learning materials.

According to Jayshree Mehta, joint-director of the center, the materials will free the teacher from routine activities of checking the correctness of the children's answers, leaving more time for creative work.

The self-learning cards let the student learn alone without the assistance of a live teacher. The subject matter is presented in graduated steps. The learner has to read the information and then answer the question based on this. The correct answer is given behind the card. The student then checks his/her answer and if it is correct goes on to the next step. Otherwise, he/she tries the problem again.

One has to wonder seriously what it is that institutions such as the Vikram Sarabhai Community Science Center and the National Council for Educational Research and Training are trying to do. There is no doubt science teaching in our schools is dreadful, but are these self-learning cards the answer? Are seven-

and eight-year-olds supposed to learn mathematics on their own? If the problem is that the teachers are incompetent, something should be done, like training, rewards, etc. Just coming up with some pieces of cardboard will not do. If this is what these institutions are capable of, we probably can do quite well without them. After all, these cards and other self-teaching materials are quite prevalent in the US and elsewhere. It should be easy enough to take some good packages here and translate them, changing some of the pictures and words to make them "Indian." I wonder if these educationists are aware that even in the US, such teaching is unpopular with teachers trained in the past decade or two to the point that even workbooks are frowned upon by some who think that such materials only hamper the learning process and creativity.

Water-Logging a Serious Environmental Problem

According to a study by the Administrative Staff College in Hyderabad, waterlogging has grown into a major environmental problem in canal-irrigated areas in the country with over 25 million acres of fertile land being affected. It also said that another 62 million acres are facing the problem of salinity.

Waterlogging is a condition where water table rise to root zones of the crops and deprive them of oxygen and cripple their growth. It also brings up dissolved salts to increase salinity levels.

According to the study, West Bengal is the most seriously affected state. The problem is growing in many other states, especially in Punjab, UP, Haryana, and Gujarat.

The main reasons for the increase in waterlogging are poor provisions for drainages in irrigation projects, inefficient water management practices and lack of coordination between the agencies involved.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Adiseshiah for "Pause" in Education

Dr Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, head of the Madras Institute of Development Studies, has called for a "shock treatment of pause" in education for two years.

Speaking in Tiruchi on February 6, he said "the way forward for the educational system is to stop further expansion of the school system and concentrate on bringing all institutions to the level of the best ones. This should be followed by closing our universities and colleges (except the new ones and the professional colleges) for two years and sending the students and most teachers to work on community projects in the poverty-stricken rural areas and urban slums."

In his lecture entitled Higher Education — Its Problems and Perspectives, Dr Adiseshiah said academic credit could be given to students for doing this community work; they could also be paid the same wages as paid to other similar workers.

BRAIN DRAIN

A recent WHO survey states that India is the largest donor of medical manpower to industrialized countries, with 150,000 Indian physicians working abroad. A UN survey reports a similar migration of our engineers so that on these two groups the benefit from our expenditure of Rs 2.4 billion in training them accrues to the US, Britain and the industrialized countries — in a kind of reverse technical assistance from India to the industrialized West.

DUAL INSTITUTIONS

The education system maintains a set of double standards. A small minority of educational institutions at all levels is of good quality. But access to them is selective and is mostly availed of by top social groups. But this core of good institutions

is surrounded by a large number of institutions with open door access and poor standards. This dualism leads to undesirable social segregation and to a perpetuation and strengthening of inequalitarian trends in our society and even in quantitative terms, it is mainly the upper and middle classes that are the beneficiaries of the system. Finally, we have reached a stage of academic and moral breakdown in our general universities and colleges.

Dr Adiseshiah proposed his "shock treatment of pause" and sending students and teachers to do community work as a way to solve the problems of brain drain and dual institutions.

Election rules are no better. Under prevailing practice, a separate booth is set up for leprosy patients in their settlement. The election officers are also leprosy workers. The rules also decree that a leprosy patient cannot contest elections.

The Motor Vehicles Act of 1939 bars a leprosy patient from getting a driving license. Only a small percentage of leprosy patients suffer from sensory loss in the limbs.

There is also the scare of sterilization. During the Emergency, they were supposedly caught unceremoniously and given the treatment.

Only in the area of travel is the situation not bad. The Railways have even offered, since 1974, concessions to leprosy patients.

In a nutshell, Moodbidri recommends, there should be no legislation separately and exclusively for leprosy and it should not any longer be considered a notifiable disease. At the most, the victim should be treated on par with a patient suffering from other infectious diseases.

Indian Group Reports on Proton Decay

Five experimental groups from India, Japan, Switzerland, Ohio and Utah gathered in a ski resort near Salt Lake city in Utah to discuss their observations that could possibly be interpreted as occasional decaying of protons. A team of Indian scientists have over the last 2 years, detected in the Kolar Gold mines several suspected proton decays. Similar observations have been made in Japan and other places.

Proton decays have been predicted by several Grand Unification Theories in Physics which seek to incorporate most of the basic forces of nature within a single theoretical framework.

Tiger Preserves Trebled in 10 Years

Tiger population in protected areas in India has more than trebled in last 10 years of the Project Tiger. The number of tigers in the areas covered by 15 reserves set up with the help of the World Wildlife Fund had risen from 268 in 1972, the year before the reserves, to 875 at the last count in 1982.

Tigers were declared an endangered species by India in 1970 and tiger-hunting was banned. The last nationwide tiger census in 1979 showed the number had grown to 3,015 from only 1,844 in 1972.

Red Chillies Are Not Vegetables

A division bench of the Madras High Court has upheld the state tax authorities' contention that "red ripe or fruit chillies" are not vegetables and therefore taxable.

Eight traders from Tirunelveli district had argued in a writ petition that red, ripe or fruit chillies were vegetables and as such should be exempt from sales tax.

Yoga In Treatment of Diseases

Doctors are increasingly accepting yoga as a therapeutic tool, particularly for the treatment of functional diseases, and the time has come for yoga to be introduced as a subject in university medical curricula, it was suggested at a symposium in Bombay on January 28-29.

The efficacy of particular yoga asanas (postures), kriyas (cleansing practices) and pranayam (breathing practices) in the treatment of specific diseases has been established after scientific evaluation, the doctors were told during a two-day exhibition-cum-workshop on "the respiratory system and yoga."

Dr R.B.N. Purandare, gynecologist, led the discussion. He is a highly vocal advocate of yoga who prescribes light yogic practices for his patients as helpful in the process of delivery, breastfeeding and physical recovery of the mother.

He explained that yogasanas and pranayam enable one to gain control progressively on the functions of the abdominal organs, heart, brain and mind and thus help relieve disorders like colitis, asthma and rheumatoid arthritis.

Yoga Vidya Niketan, engaged in popularizing yoga as a way to better health for the common person, organized the program as part of a series during which it has sought to demonstrate how yoga could help in the prevention and cure of disorders of the heart, spine and digestive system.



Opposition Parties Observe Demands Day

Ten opposition parties observed "Demands Day" nationwide on February 13 marking the first phase of a six-week action program charted by the recent opposition meeting in Calcutta. In New Delhi, the opposition parties submitted a 11-point charter of demands to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi urging steps to relieve the common man's plight.

The main demands included an adequate supply of essential commodities at reasonable prices, remunerative prices for agricultural produce, speedy implementation of land reforms and making the

right to work a fundamental right. The charter of demands said, "while rising prices and acute unemployment had cast a heavy burden on the common man, the government lacked direction and was totally alienated from the problems of people. At a rally that followed a demonstration in front of the Gandhi's residence, leaders of the opposition gave a call for building a powerful people's movement in support of their demands. Lok Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party did not participate in the demonstrations.

Shourie: Most Disruptive Phase of Indira

Arun Shourie, general secretary of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, said in Madurai on Republic Day that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was entering the most disruptive phase of her tenure. He said having undermined the institutions of the state, her politics now was disrupting the society in which one community was pitched against another and one region against another. In this connection he cited the prevailing situation in Assam,

Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Regarding the press, he said it had now really become the mouthpiece of the government.

To members of PUCL, he said in India there were many organizations with the same aim. There was absolutely no question of competition. We must have a completely open mind and there is room for 500 such organizations, he said.

MGR Confesses to Black Money

"I had black money and helped both the party and the people with that," Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran said on December 10.

Refuting several allegations of DMK,

MGR asserted that his black money was never utilized for his personal comforts and he did not split the DMK conspiring with Cong(I) just to escape from tax problems.

Shalinitai Patil In a Bangalore Hotel



"Why were rooms for Shalinitai Patil and her secretary booked in the name of R. L. Kapoor?"

On the night of December 27, a party of income-tax and excise officials showed up at Room 724 in Hotel Ashok in Bangalore with a search warrant. Alarmed at this intrusion, the two women occupying the room made an urgent telephone call to K.H. Patil, the local Congress president, who rushed to their rescue. Within minutes of his arrival, the taxmen left; Patil had invoked the names of Indira Gandhi and Pranab Mukherjee. According to the Indian Express, the taxmen thought it was prudent to leave the scene.

The two women were reported to be Shalinitai Patil, MP and wife of the chief minister of Maharashtra, and her secretary Sukanya. And the rooms were booked in the name of R.L. Kapoor, a businessman-friend of the Patils.

What were suitcases alleged to be full of money and gold doing in the room occupied by Shalinitai Patil who, by her own admission, was in the city only for asthma treatment? (Bangalore climate is said to be not good for asthmatics).

Did the suitcases contain slush money which Karnataka Chief Minister Ramakrishna Hegde had alleged was being

circulated to destabilize his government? Why were the rooms booked in the name of R.L. Kapoor?

MEDIA UNINTERESTED

Some of these questions were raised by the Indian Express, along with the contradictions between the versions of K.H. Patil, who denied everything, and of Shalinitai Patil, who admitted to the tax-raid and K.H. Patil's help.

However, the local press in Bangalore showed little interest. With the exception of two papers, they buried the story in inside pages. More prominence was given to the statements of Congress(I) than to any investigation. This was done by the largest-selling English daily in Karnataka, its Kannada counterpart, and the newest English daily and its Kannada counterpart.

In a subsequent comment, the Indian Express found this behavior curious, especially given the fact that Shalinitai Patil has been visiting Bangalore often to woo the five MLAs belonging to the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samithi, who recently switched from supporting the Hegde ministry to neutrality.

SC Orders Speedy Trial of Antulay

KISHAN BAJWA

Unless Maharashtra Chief Minister Abdul Rahman Antulay can pull yet another trick from his sleeves, he may finally have to face the consequence of his deeds during his chief-ministership. Antulay was forced to resign from his post two years ago following the exposure of many corruption scandals and conviction in a Bombay court. However, Antulay effectively used the legal system to serve his needs and even managed to get the Court's decision overturned. He may not have any chance now that the Supreme Court finally directed a speedy trial against him in Bombay High Court on charges of bribery, corruption, cheating,

extortion and misuse of public office.

The Constitution Bench comprising Justices DA Desai, RS Pathak, O Chinappa Reddy, AP Sen and VB Eradi held on February 16 that a member of the Legislative Assembly is not a public servant. It set aside a judgement by a Bombay Special Judge RB Sule and unanimously held that prior sanction of the Legislative Assembly to prosecute a MLA was not required. Allowing two criminal appeals of RS Nayak and PB Samant, two former MLAs, the court held that the special judge was "clearly in error."

Law Commission Suggests Changes

Protection of Reporters' Sources

Rejection of Tainted Evidence

The Law Commission has suggested two major changes in law, both of which would enhance the rights of individuals in their dealings with government prosecution. One would allow courts discretion in rejecting evidence that has been obtained by the government through illegal or improper means. The other would enable journalists to protect the confidentiality of their sources while testifying in a court of law. The two changes will move Indian law out of the colonial period, taking into account changes made in Britain since that time as well as the laws of the United States.

EVIDENCE ACT

The Commission has found that in Indian courts the illegality or impropriety involved in obtaining evidence is of no consequence in regard to its admissibility at a criminal trial. The proposed changes in the Evidence Act, which dates back to 1872, will enable courts to take a second look at unlawful arrests, illegal blood and breath tests, unwarranted medical examinations, illegal search of a person or property, breach of privacy including in-

terception of communication, illegal tapping of telephones, eavesdropping and confessions obtained from an accused after denying him the advice of a solicitor.

MEDIA PROTECTION

On the question of whether journalists can be compelled to disclose before courts of law the sources of information obtained by them in confidence, the Commission says that courts should have the discretion to accord this privilege in certain cases. Though the code of ethics expects journalists to protect their sources, this is not recognized in law courts or in any statute. This is the first time that a concrete proposal has been made to the government to at least partially recognize this rule of professional conduct in law.

The recommendation made runs close to the proposed change in the Canadian Evidence Act and the 1981 amendment to the Contempt of Court Act in England, where the element of judicial discretion was introduced. In the USA, several states have passed "shield laws" that give much greater protection to journalists.

Rajya Sabha Election Due in March

According to the Chief Elections Commissioner RK Trivedi, the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha are likely to be held in the third week of March. One-third of the members of the Upper House which has a strength of 244, retire every two years. Elections will be held in March for 74 of the 78 seats. The remaining four are nominated seats which are filled by the governments after the elections. This biennial election will cover 19 states and Union territories, members of the state assemblies constitute the electoral college for the poll. According to the present

indications, the strength of the Janata, BHP and Lok Dal will be considerably reduced after these elections. These 1/3 seats were elected in April 1978 when Janata was ruling. If the Congress(I) wins a 2/3 majority in Rajya Sabha, it can amend the constitution without any opposition support; Congress(I) already has 2/3 majority in the Lok Sabha. It has been speculated that if Indira Gandhi is serious about changing to the Presidential form of government, she may try to get the constitution amended after the Rajya Sabha election.

Remittances Reach Record Level

Remittance by Indians settled in foreign countries reached a record level of Rs 15.76 billion in 1982, a 35% increase from 1981 figure of Rs 11.5 billion. The

figure in 1978 was only Rs 4 billion. Remittances have become one of the major sources of foreign exchange by the Indian government in the past 6 years or so.

CM Stephen Dead

CM Stephen, an outspoken General Secretary of Indira Congress, died in Idukki, Kerala, on Jan 16 after a heart attack. He was 65. Stephen was visiting the area to strengthen Congress activities following the party's session at Calcutta.

During Janata rule, he was the leader of the Congress parliamentary party and the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha. He was included in the Union Cabinet in 1980 after Gandhi was returned to power although he was defeated in the general election. Later he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Karnataka. Stephen resigned as minister after Indira Congress's humiliating defeat in elections in Karnataka and Andhra when Gandhi wanted to give new image to the party.

Stephen recently became an extremely outrageous personality. He had called a reputed journalist Arun Shourie as anti-national after Shourie had broken the story that the central government and its appointed bureaucrats were familiar with the explosive situation in Assam before the carnage there during the February elections in which over 3000 people killed.

Stephen had recently been calling for the ouster of Dr. Farooq Abdullah's ministry from Jammu and Kashmir. Following the exposure of a bribery scandal in Karnataka in which Indira Congress had offered money to a Janata MLA to switch side, Stephen had said with pride that it was Congress(I) right to remove Hegde's government from power.

Kashmiri Secessionist Hanged after Seven Years In Jail

(continued from page 1)

role played by the Prime Minister and her son in the state. The unfortunate killing of Mhatre which is being condemned by all is now being taken to political advantage by the Cong(I) to launch a fresh attack on the non-Cong(I) government in the state.

The Butt hanging has created additional strains in the Indo-Pak relations as well. Butt and the Kashmir Liberation Army are seen to be fostered by the Pak government and the events are being portrayed as reflective of a Pakistani bid to start a new war. At least this is what the Prime Minister and Rajiv Gandhi have said in a number of their recent pronouncements. An inevitable consequence is the poisoning of the political atmosphere in which the slow attempts at normalization of the bilateral relations between the two countries has been proceeding.

While many Indian newspapers have condemned the killing of Mhatre and have approvingly reported on the hanging of Maqbool Butt, no one has raised any questions about some of the implications behind the carrying out now of the death sentence on Butt. The Kashmiri secessionist had been kept in detention all these years while the death sentence hung on his heads. But the government has chosen to carry out the sentence now when there are various political movements in the country seeking greater au-

tonomy for the states. The agitations in Assam and Punjab and the demands articulated by the chief ministers of Karnataka and Jammu and Kashmir have often been portrayed by the ruling party as anti-national. These agitations have often involved violent incidents and it is quite possible to portray them in a light similar to the present events surrounding Mhatre killing. Many violent events are indeed stimulated by the ruling party itself as has been shown to be the case in Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. The main difference between the Butt incidents and other national events arising from political dissent with the Congress(I) lies in the well-established connections between Butt and the Pakistani regime. Leaving this aside, the response of the Gandhi government in executing Butt at this juncture can be seen as one of its ways in dealing with political dissent. From this perspective, the present events are attached with more significance than what is seen on the surface. Especially of concern, is the continual attempt by the ruling party to portray the demands of the states for greater autonomy as demands inspired by and supported by foreign agencies and hence demands which are threats to national security. That the concern is real and not imaginary can be seen from the statements of Rajiv Gandhi accusing the legally elected state government of Farooq Abdullah as a "security risk."

Civil Liberties In Bihar

(continued from page 5)

PRIVATE MILITIAS

The state has further armed itself by raising six battalions of Special Armed Force and Home Guards. It has gone on liberally distributing arms in the countryside. The Bihar Government has been giving gun licences to landholders who fulfill grain levy targets, who availed themselves of family planning schemes and so on. Not only that, the Government has openly thrown all laws overboard and encouraged the big landowners to form private militias, whose 'commanders' and 'soldiers' are combing the villages, arms in hand, for the organizers of the poor people. What a contrast! Five years ago, the state Government tried to put into practice a scheme of raising a volunteer force of harijan youths who would be trained and given guns at state expense for protection of the poor people. The scheme came in the wake of large-scale bloodshed by landowners in various parts of the state. What happened to the scheme? The officials argued the scheme out. They pleaded that arms in the hands of harijans would "provoke" others. The same plea was made by the Prime Ministers Mrs. Gandhi. The same Government which vetoed the harijan volunteer force scheme did not have even a minimum of human sense in issuing a notification according to which bows and arrows would come under the purview of the Arms Act. Fortunately public pressure made the Government withdraw the order but the

notification exposed its motive clearly.

For a better atmosphere in the countryside and the towns, what is urgently called for is stopping the daily use of Section 144 for checking people from gathering and of Sections 107 and 151. Sections 144 and 151 have been so ubiquitously imposed in different parts and on all occasions that there is a common demand for restrictions on their use. The last Annual Day meet of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha at Dumka was broken up with the help of Section 144. The meeting of Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samiti at Jehanabad recently was disallowed under this Section. Rallies of students, teachers, workers, other employees, political parties and peasant organizations have been prohibited under this Section; they are not even allowed to have a discussion among themselves. Under such circumstances, Section 144 had become one of the greatest devices in the hands of the state in stifling the voice of protest.

The National Security Act, the Essential Services Maintenance Act, the Bihar Control of Crimes Act and other such acts which provide for detention without trial should be removed at once from the law book.

In view of the situation, the PUCI (Bihar) should coordinate its work and programs with those of other mass organisations and democratic bodies to serve the cause of the downtrodden. The PUCI (Bihar) is deeply conscious of the fact that the movement for civil rights cannot depend too much upon the judicial process. This is borne out by its experiences. The law is as good as it is implemented. The endless wait in the courts for the disposal of cases has been a frustrating exercise for too many people. Besides the weaker sections are denied legal protection by the law and order machinery itself. The financial burden of seeking justice is also beyond the means of people.

While continuing to uphold the rule of law through judicial process, we thought of other peaceful and democratic means to resist the encroachments on civil rights either by the state or the powerful few. Legal aid cells should be strengthened in Patna and district headquarters and steps initiated to organize mass agitation at grassroots level to resist attacks on civil rights. An alert and vigilant organization should be there with a regular program of seminars, prompt initiative for investigating atrocities, and for awakening the public and developing a medium for communication with them.

(from FRONTIER)

of Apartheid Regime

R.K. LAXMAN IN THE TIMES OF INDIA



National Integration Council Meets

(continued from page 1)

Every member of the minority community should be made to feel that he took pride in the country while keeping his cultural identity. At the same time nothing should be done to injure his pride and patriotic feelings.

Hegde expressed his happiness that Karnataka had not experienced any communal riot or atrocities on Harijans of major nature during the last one year. Every district magistrate and superintendent of police had been made responsible for crimes committed on minority communities, he said.

Scores Killed In Punjab

(continued from page 1)



Akali volunteers blocking the highway near Jalandhar with tractors and carts.—N. Thiagarajan

ordering shopkeepers to obey a strike call. A militant organization called the Hindu Protection Force called the strike to demand the release of their leader Pawan Sharma and to protest against an alleged partisan attitude by the police during the Akali-sponsored strike on February 8. Sharma had been arrested the day after the February 8 strike on charges of inciting trouble. According to the Police Superintendent, groups of young Sikhs climbed onto the rooftops and started firing at the police and public. Clashes between the police and Sikh extremists have continued since then from the rooftops of the Golden Temple. There were also reports of bomb blasts in other cities. A curfew has been enforced in Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jullundur and other major cities with the situation being extremely sensitive and tense.

Haryana has also been affected by the events in the neighboring state. There have been reports of clashes between Hindus and Sikhs in Panipat and Karnal also. Additional troops have been ordered in both Haryana and Punjab.

FEB 8 STRIKE

A general strike in Punjab on February 8 called by the Akali Dal to press for its demands was wide spread with the government deploying over 50,000 policemen and army personnel. Hundreds of people were arrested in preventive detention. The strike was mostly peaceful with few incidents of violence in which some people were injured. The government cancelled all trains to and from Punjab. Bus service was also suspended.

BHINDRANWALE'S COMMUNALISM

Earlier Akali Dal President Harchand Singh Longowal finally conceded on February 1 that he had "fundamental differences" with the extremist leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale on the course the present party agitation should take. In talking to newsmen, Longowal disclosed in Amritsar that when he asked Bhindranwale what the next stage of the Sikh campaign should be, Bhindranwale suggested that motor cycles and arms should be purchased on a mass scale for killing people of a particular community. The community Bhindranwale identified was not reported by the Press Trust of India in line with the Indian reporting restrictions designed to limit the spread of communal differences, but it is generally accepted that Bhindranwale was referring to the Hindus. However, Longowal is reported to have asserted that he was firmly committed to communal harmony and peace and did not approve of the line of action suggested by Bhindranwale and hardliners. Longowal defended his party's strategy by saying that it was agreed upon by all the Sikh leadership except Bhindranwale.

Despite the fact that Bhindranwale has been openly advocating violence and communal hatred and there are many charges against him, no action has been taken by the Center or the state government to detain Bhindranwale. For that matter, even most Sikh extremists who have been involved in throwing meat into Hindu Temples, shooting in public places from motor-cycles and throwing bombs

at the railway stations, cinemas and other public areas, have remained at large despite the presence of a considerably large force police and paramilitary forces. One wonders why that is the case.

NEW FORMULA

According to a report by Kuldeep Nayar, there are rumors of a formula to deal with the Punjab crisis under consideration by the central government. This formula suggests that Chandigarh go to Punjab and Fazilka and Abohar be divided between Punjab and Haryana with Punjab getting Fazilka and Haryana getting Abohar. Punjab state Congress(I) Chief RN Bhatia who appears to have good relationship with the Akali Dal is said to have initiated the new formula with the Akali leaders. Former External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh is also reported to be participating in the negotiations. Swaran Singh had earlier served in as an intermediary between the Akali leaders and the Center but the negotiations had failed.

According to the new formula being considered, a large amount of money will be made available to Haryana to build a new capital. As regards the demand about river waters, it is suggested that a Supreme Court judge be appointed for the division of river waters between Punjab and Haryana and for the constitution of a territorial commission to decide on the merger of Punjabi speaking areas with adjacent Punjab. Along with Chandigarh, Akalis have listed these as the main demands.

Remembering Prem Chand

CHAMAN PRABHAKAR

By a strange coincidence three writers of three great countries died in a single year. That year was 1936 and the writers were Maxim Gorky in Russia, Lu Hsun in China and Prem Chand in India. While lakhs (hundreds of thousands) of people mourned Gorky's death in Russia, Prem Chand was taken for final rites by just about 100 people or so and someone in the bazaar remarked: 'Some teacher seems to have died!'

Yes, teacher he was, for a very long period. Prem Chand had taught in schools, but he taught more through his creative literature and his significance was recognized rather long after his death. Today he is considered the greatest Hindi writer and he is yet to be surpassed, even after nearly fifty years of his death. The peasant society of his time came to life in Prem Chand's novels and stories, and the reality of the Indian village scene has not changed much in these fifty years. That is why his novels and short stories still seem, to be modern and real to the core.

Prem Chand's life was not a bed of roses. He was born in a village called Lamhi, near Banaras on July 31, 1880. To carry on his studies he had to walk miles and read under street lamps. His father, a post-master, could not afford to give education to his children. But Prem Chand had an urge and with his own efforts he continued. He used to do tuitions at five rupees a month, out of which he used to send three rupees to his family and try to live on the remaining two rupees. For decades he could not repay petty loans. Still, he could not make for college. With great efforts he got admission and after passing the intermediate examination became a school teacher which gave him financial security. He was a voracious reader; whatever book he could lay hands on he would read. His first novels and stories were published in Urdu, but he changed to writing in Hindi, seeing the vast scope of readership in that language. His first story in Hindi was published in 1916, called 'Panch Parmeshwar'. It created almost a stir and he was soon recognized as a promising storyteller and novelist.

Prem Chand was greatly influenced by the nationalist movement of his time and gave frequent expression to it in his stories and novels. His story collection Sozewan (Concern for the Nation) was banned by British colonialists. Though he

was influenced by Gandhi and Gandhism in the early period of his writings, he became increasingly disillusioned by it and moved closer to socialist ideas. He hailed the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The idealist tone of his writings was giving way to realism. Godan, published a few months before his death in 1936, gave such a picture of the Indian social reality that it is now recognized as a classic and has been translated into many Indian and foreign languages. Mrinal Sen made a film on his Kafan. The film was made in Telugu with the title of Oka Oorie Katha.

Prem Chand presided over the first conference of Progressive Writers Association held in Lucknow in 1936, where he urged writers to write for humanist ideas.

Prem Chand was not only a gifted novelist and short-story writer, he was a fiery journalist too. All his earnings he spent to buy a printing press and bring out a literary journal Hans. Hans became a forum for strong nationalist views, Prem Chand occasionally used to write a column in the paper. He recognized the menace of Hitler and Fascism and cautioned his readers against it. In September 1936, the last issue of Hans under his editorship carried his article 'Mahajani Sabhaita' (Capitalist Civilization). In this article he pointed out the ruthlessness and dehumanisation of bourgeois culture.

Prem Chand wrote more than 200 short stories, 3 short plays, 11 novels and innumerable comments. When he died he was working on an unfinished novel Mangalsutra, which shows further development of his thought. He was becoming more and more of a realist and had shed his idealist illusions.

Prem Chand suffered from illnesses caused by the hard conditions of his life and died on October 8, 1936, in Banaras. He never consummated his childhood marriage and married a widow. He left behind two sons, Sripat Rai and Amrit Rai, both of them noted writers in Hindi. His wife, Shivrani Prem Chand, was also a noted Hindi writer.

Prem Chand, by his novels and short stories, revolutionized Hindi literature. He will remain a beacon-light for many more years for young Indian writers.

(from Frontier)

Dealing With Playboys:

A Look at India and China

R.N.Raju

Recent news reporting from New Delhi by Indian Express and from Beijing by The New York Times contrast the attitude taken by the governments in the two countries to crimes committed by families of the politically powerful. The Times report from Beijing said that one of late Marshal Zhu De's grand sons, Zhu Guohua, was executed for rape in Tianjin in October. Another grandson, Zhu Yuan-chao, was spared the death penalty for serious economic crimes. Marshall Zhu De was the commander of the revolutionary army under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and is considered one of the founders of the revolutionary China. A memorial room honors him in the mausoleum of Mao Ze-dong.

As part of the Chinese government's efforts to eliminate any corrupting influence of political power, the government has taken a serious stand to bring to trial and punish all offenders irrespective of their connection to any important political personality. Recently, a grandnephew of President Li Xiannian was executed in Xian for rape and murder. The son of Deputy Foreign Minister Yao Guang was arrested in Beijing for smuggling pornographic magazines.

The news report from New Delhi concerned shooting incidents in the Rashtrapati Bhavan which occurred on January 2 and 3. The report said that the Presidential palace was turned into a shooting range several weeks ago when the grandson of President Zail Singh shot down about 270 birds with a .22 calibre gun. At the time of the shooting, the President was away on an official tour abroad. His 18-year old grandson, Gurinder Singh, shot down several rare birds, including about half a dozen Siberian cranes. The cranes migrate to the Mughal Gardens, the Presidents official garden and other areas in Delhi during winter.

It is now reported that an enquiry is underway, requested by the President, to identify how the photographer could have gained access to the garden and taken the pictures of the birds that were shot down, thus exposing to the public knowledge the whole incident. Meanwhile, Gurinder Singh is reported to have re-

turned to Chandigarh, where he is a college student. Those who have come to know of the incident have raised the question of why the government is attempting now to prosecute the photographer instead of holding Gurinder Singh guilty of shooting down hundreds of rare birds. To political observers of India, this particular event comes as no surprise since such situations occur almost daily in every corner of the country. Even when the crimes committed were more serious and affected the lives of thousands of people such as it occurred during the heydays of late Sanjay Gandhi, the political immunity always held sway.

INDIAN PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION IN NORTH AMERICA

President: Harinder Mahil, Vancouver
Secretary: Dr. Shree Mulay, Montreal
Central Office:

IPANA
P.O. Box 69646, Stn. "K"
Vancouver, B.C. V5K 4W7
Canada

Units:

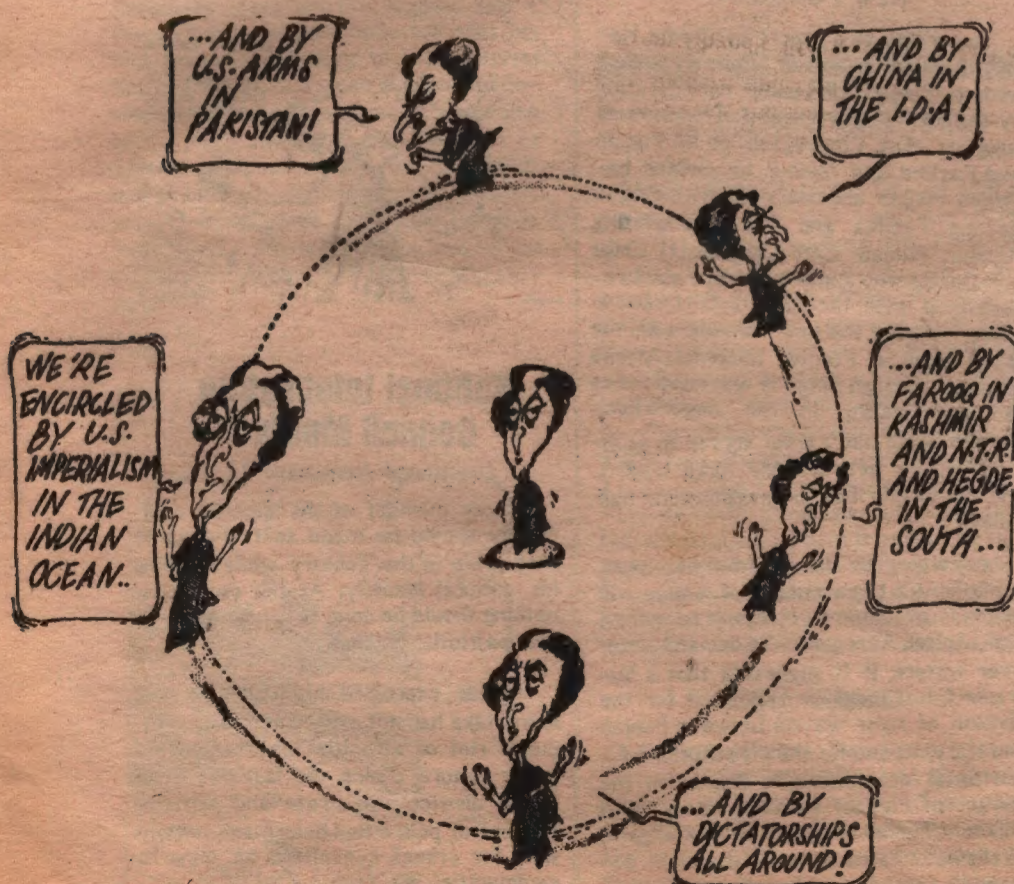
Albany: Box 22940, Stn. A
SUNY Albany, NY 12222
Boston: P.O. Box 120, MIT Branch
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
Montreal: P.O. Box 37
Westmount Que. H3Z 2T1
New Jersey: P.O. Box 8
Oakhurst, N.J. 07755
New York: P.O. Box 665
New York, NY 10025
Toronto: P.O. Box 223, Stn. S
Toronto, Ont.

INDIA NOW is published every month by IPANA, P.O. Box 665, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025, USA.

Annual subscriptions are \$10 in the US and Canada, \$16 overseas.

For institutions and libraries, subscriptions are \$16 in the US and Canada, \$20 overseas.

Correspondence from Canada and overseas should be sent to the Montreal address.



India Now Staff

Writers: Kishan Bajwa (national scene), Chin Banerjee (race relations), Dolores Chew (women), Tania Dasgupta (Toronto), Javed Mirza (New York), R.N. Raju (national scene), V. Kumar (analysis), Daya Varma (analysis).

Production: Shyamal Bhaumik, Nikhil Desai, Abha Sur.

Business Manager: Pradip Sen, 514-931-4728.

Editor: Sekhar Ramakrishnan (212-866-1616)

Circulation Manager (U.S.): Tarun Chaudhury, 201-493-8674.

INDIA NOW

c/o IPANA
P.O. Box 665
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

c/o IPANA
P.O. Box 37
Westmount
Que. H3Z 2T1



1084 S 4702
HUNDAL, SUKHWANT
6306 SOPHIA ST
VANCOUVER
BRITISH COLUMBIA V5W 2W6